MARVEL MASTERWORKS
HOWARD THE DUCK
VOLUME 2

HOWARD THE DUCK Nos. 15-31
& ANNUAL No. 1
STEVE GERBER, GENE COLAN & VAL MAYERIK

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

HOWARD THE DUCK

VOLUME 2

COLLECTING

HOWARD THE DUCK Nos. 15-31

& ANNUAL No. 1

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NOS. 15-31 & ANNUAL NO. 1

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HOWARD THE DUCK CREATED BY STEVE GERBER & VAL MAYERIK

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INTRODUCTION
BY VAL MAYERIK

As it is often said, let's begin at the beginning. How did I get into comics at Marvel in the first place? In 1972, I was attending Youngstown State University, a small college known mostly for its school of engineering. The art department left much to be desired to say the least, and art was my major.

One spring day in painting class, I was discussing comics with a fellow student and our conversation was overheard by another student. "Hey," she said to us, "sorry to interrupt, but have either of you guys heard of Dan Adkins?"

I answered that we had. "Well," she said, "he lives just down the street from me."

I couldn't believe my ears. Dan was a well-known inker for many comic book publishers and also a good penciler in his own right. The only reason she knew about Dan was because he was a neighbor. She continued, "I guess he's an inker or something. What does an inker do?"

I had an uncomfortable *inkling* of disbelief. I couldn't believe that providence had allowed this opportunity to arrive at my doorstep completely unbidden. I may have imagined that someday I would find a way to pursue work in comics, but up to that point, I had made no tangible or proactive plans in that direction. Suddenly, BAM!!! There it was. If I didn't act on this there would be no one to blame but myself.

I asked her if she could possibly arrange for me to contact Dan. She said she would, and she did.

After two weeks of nail biting and back and forth with Dan, a meeting was arranged. At the time, besides attending art classes, I worked part time driving a delivery truck and taught karate three nights a week. In other words, I had no future. While attending college, I would work summers in the steel mills and factories in Youngstown, and, if nothing else, that experience taught me that I certainly didn't want to be working in a factory the rest of my life, no offense to factory workers.

So, I drove 60 miles to East Liverpool, Ohio, and met with Dan. He looked at the art samples I brought and seemed to like them. He was rather non-committal. I couldn't get a fix on him. He said he already had a young prospective artist working with him (it turned out to be P. Craig Russell) and he wasn't sure he wanted to take on another guy. Also, Dan's studio was in his home and he wasn't sure if his wife would be too happy about another stranger traipsing about the place. I left not knowing what to expect. But, long story short, Dan took me in. Craig and I spent the summer helping Dan with inking chores and some penciling. Marvel assigned Craig and me each a short story to pencil; Dan inked them, Roy Thomas liked them and we were in. Both Craig and I were accepted as Marvel artists and we couldn't have been happier. After about seven months at Dan's place, I moved back to Youngstown and set up my own studio. I remained there for about four and a half years before moving to New York.

In late 1972 and into 1973, I worked for a while penciling the sword-and-sorcery series Thongor in *Creatures on the Loose*. I also started penciling Man-Thing in *Fear* during that time and visited Marvel's offices in New York where I first met Steve Gerber. Our meeting was brief and we talked about Man-Thing, other potential projects and expressed our future hopes and desires as far as what we wanted to do in comics. I told Steve I wanted to draw Conan but at that time the chances seemed remote. He then said that he would try to come up with a barbarian character that could somehow manifest itself in a *Man-Thing* issue. Even though our meeting was short, I felt we got to know each other pretty well. We hit it off, had a good rapport and I knew I would enjoy drawing just about anything Steve cooked up.

By 1974, Steve and I had been working on Man-Thing for a few months and were turning out issues that I think we both were happy with. Steve wanted to further exploit the supernatural elements of MT's character. I don't recall all the details and those that I do recall I probably don't remember in the correct order. What I do remember is that Jennifer Kale, a supporting character in *MT*, began having strange dreams and began manifesting psychic powers. It was revealed MT also had some sort of supernatural powers and they both seemed to be summoning things from another dimension. Or as it has been known to be stated, "The nexus of all realities had been disturbed." A portal opened onto other dimensions and deposited the inhabitants from said dimensions into the swamp where the Man-Thing resided. One of these was a rather odd creature, a creature that I'm sure no one, not even Steve, and certainly not me, ever dreamed would rise to such spectacular heights of popularity. Yes, the critter was a duck. A walking, talking, anthropomorphized duck named Howard. Howard smoked cigars and had a tendency to offer his unsolicited insights and opinions about this world which he had been thrust into against his will.

The rest, as the saying goes, is comic book history.

I am often asked, "How did Howard come about?" I'm afraid my answer was always a bit anticlimactic. Steve described the character in his plot in a very general way: He's a duck but not a duck you would see on a farm. Not a biologically accurate creature but not too cartoony either. Not Daffy or Donald but not a wild mallard. So, I just drew my first impressions, what quickly came to mind: the hat, the cigar, the suit jacket, vest and tie. I decided to leave him pantsless and I'm not entirely sure why. I think that I didn't want to constrain the physical characteristics which generically indicated "duck." There had to be some feathers exposed and seeing the webbed feet was absolutely necessary. After all, we were going for a somewhat comedic effect. I drew Howard into that panel that introduced him in one attempt; no preliminary sketches, no back and forth with Steve or Marvel editorial staff, just one shot, one gesture. Steve loved it, Roy Thomas okayed it and that was that. Just putting my initial instinct to paper was all it took.

The fan response was immediate and massive. There were only a few *Man-Thing* issues with Howard before there was talk of giving him his own title. Soon thereafter the word was that he would indeed have his own book and Steve, of course, would be the writer, but there was no mention of me being the artist. There was no confirmation as to who the artist would be. But then it was announced that Frank Brunner would be taking on the drawing chores. One might think that it would be deeply disappointing and upsetting that I would be passed over for this position. Actually, it wasn't. At around the same time I had signed on with Doug Moench to illustrate Marvel's *Monster of Frankenstein* series, both the color comic and the black-and-white magazine stories. As a big classic monster fan, I was very enthused and focused on that. This led to me also being assigned to the *Supernatural Thrillers* Living Mummy series. I was content with the work set before me and besides, I don't think anyone, even Steve had any idea how successful the Howard book would be.

So fast forward to 1977 and I find myself having just moved to New York City. I moved there not just to further my comics career. At the time, I was also an aspiring actor and New York was the place to study acting. As it happened, Steve moved out of the city at about the same time. I don't think our respective times of residency overlapped. As far as I remember we never met up while I was living in NYC; however, we did work together on Howard. Howard had a daily newspaper strip that was being run in about fifty or sixty newspapers. I had only been in the city a few months when Marvel editor-in-chief Archie Goodwin called me and informed me that Gene Colan had quit the strip and asked if I would be interested in taking on the drawing chores. I had no other work prospects at the time, and, since it would be a chance to get back to work on the Duck, I said

yes, not realizing what a deadline nightmare I was letting myself in for. Deadlines were Steve's nemesis. The comic strip syndicate's policy was to have the strips, both dailies and Sundays, one month ahead of the printing date. Steve had gotten so far behind that the strips were only mere days ahead of publishing. I was left with producing one month's worth of strips in four days. After many late nights and lunches at my drawing board, I managed to at least get the strip back to a workable schedule. I continued on with it for about another month before I exited and Alan Kupperberg took over the strip.

Shortly thereafter, again having no ongoing work assignments, I made my way to Continuity hoping Neal Adams could find something for me to do. He was a lifesaver. Neal had many different comic artists working for him between comics jobs on advertising assignments, mostly storyboard work. I learned a great deal from him regarding how to get good paying illustration work outside of comics. But that was just one facet of Continuity. The facet, which in my opinion was the most significant, was that Continuity was a magnet for all the talented people in the business. It was a Parnassus of energy, information and creative activity. On many occasions many artists who didn't even work for Neal would show just to see what was going on and meet other artists. The whole experience not only saved me financially but helped change the direction of my career. I owe a great deal to Neal.

For my three-and-a-half years in New York, other than my short stint on the *Howard the Duck* strip, I did no other work on that character and had not been at all in touch with Steve. It seemed like my association with the character was fading both with fans and with myself. But that was okay, all things run their course.

I settled in Cleveland and was quite content there for a while. Yes, I know all the Cleveland jokes and I'm sure it doesn't meet with everyone's taste, but I found it to be a great city as far as the arts were concerned. There was a lot of live theater, the world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra, the Cleveland Institute of Art to name but a few of the cultural entities. I was still doing some work for Marvel and a few of the Warren magazines so life was moving along just fine. I illustrated a black-and-white magazine format, full-length sci-fi story for Marvel called "Paradox." Bill Mantlo was the writer and it turned out pretty well. From time to time, I'd pick up a *Howard the Duck* comic and check out what was going on, but, for the most part, was not by any means a consistent reader.

Then I get a call from Steve.

Even though we hadn't spoken for at least four years we picked up right where we left off. It's just like that with some people. You are both simpatico with each other and conversation comes easily even after a lot of time has passed. Steve had an idea for a sci-fi fantasy type of story that he had pitched to Archie Goodwin that would be published under the Epic imprint at Marvel. What that would amount to was that, under the editorial and publishing policy of the Epic imprint, the property, copyrights and all, would belong to Steve and myself. This was a big deal.

Steve flew my then-girlfriend and me out to LA and we stayed for almost four days. We were put up in a great hotel, ate in good restaurants and walked around Los Angeles at our leisure all on Steve's dime. Of course, we had meetings to discuss the upcoming project, but for the most part it was a very relaxed visit. It is probably apparent by now that in my long association with Steve we actually spent very little time in each other's presence. We had met once in New York and over the years had run into each other briefly at comic conventions, and had a few phone conversations. But during that time in LA, I really had the chance to spend quality time with Steve and we shared our thoughts not just about comics but about our attitudes and ideas regarding the world and life in general. I found him to be a very candid and honest guy, very forthcoming. At least he was with me. Even though we didn't have a lot of things in common we seemed to have similar worldviews. I can say that it was during this visit that I really got to know Steve and could honestly call him a friend.

When I got back home, Steve and I set to work on our new book. It was to be titled *Void Indigo*.

Huge controversies arose regarding the violence portrayed in *Void Indigo*. By today's standards (or lack thereof), the violence was not that extreme in my opinion and it did get approved by the editorial staff at Marvel. Rereading my old copy of *VI*, I can't for the life of me see what all the fuss was about. Canada prohibited the book from entering their country, readers were complaining, some direct sales comic shops were refusing to carry the book and things were looking grim for *Void Indigo*. We soldiered on, but the book was doomed.

Shortly after that period of angst the *Howard the Duck* movie premiered in Los Angeles before it went into wide release. I called Steve and asked what he thought of it. He said it had nothing to do with the character he had created and did not recommend it. I chose not to see it at that time and did not actually view it for the next 27 years. More on that later.

In 2006, out of the clear blue sky, I got a call from Steve. I don't remember the ostensible reason he called was but whatever it was led us to have a lengthy and informal conversation. We reminisced a bit and shared opinions about the comic book business and the world at large. Even though Steve was ill and had been for a while he sounded fine and his voice had the usual sardonic Gerber enthusiasm. We signed off with the usual "Stay in touch" and "Let's work on something together soon." That was our last conversation. A year and a half later Steve passed away.

In 2013, my family and I moved to Austin, Texas, where I remain to this day. Once the word got out that I was here and that I had never seen the *Howard the Duck* movie, a fan named Moises made it his job to remedy that situation. He arranged a screening at the Alamo Drafthouse and let it be known that I would be present for a Q&A session. A lot of people showed up and a good time was had by one and all. I truly enjoyed the movie. It bore little resemblance to Steve's vision but it was fun to watch all the same. Jeffrey Jones was excellent and Lea Thompson was gorgeous.

Then came the phenomena that no one, least of all me, ever expected.

I wasn't even planning to see *Guardians of the Galaxy*, but friends and fans were getting in touch with me and telling me that I had to see it. They said I had to stay until the very end, even past the credits, and I would be amazed. Seeing Howard's cameo and then the screen with Steve's and my name…well, I was overwhelmed to say the least. A renewed and avid interest in Howard emerged, and I began getting requests to be a guest at more than a few comic conventions. And I've been enjoying it, talking about Howard, how the character came to be and about Steve.

I realize, of course, that much of the evolution and continuation of the character took place without me. Many great artists drew the character, Gene Colan being my favorite. Looking at the material that appears in this volume, once I started reading it, I couldn't stop. I was drawn into the stories completely. That was Steve's magic. With Howard, with Dr. Bong, with Howard *the Human*… wow! I've also read some of the recent issues by Chip Zdarsky and Joe Quinones. Their efforts are respectable and reflect the adaptability of the character, but I have to say that Howard's voice, after all is said and done, is indeed Steve's voice.

That aspect of Howard went with Steve Gerber; however, it doesn't mean that the character cannot be just as interesting, funny and irascible.

And I must say, Howard the Duck has been very good to me.

– Val Mayerik
2022

HOWARD THE DUCK ANNUAL

1 | 1977 02990

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MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

KING-SIZE ANNUAL!

ALL NEW!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

EVER WONDER WHAT TRANSPIRES ON THE 1,002nd ARABIAN NIGHT?

ZOLAN & PALMER

SINBAD WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!

THE THIEF OF BAGMOM!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

REUNITED AT LAST! THE CREATIVE TEAM WHO HATCHED THE WONDROUS WATERFOWL BACK IN (GASP!) 1973:

VAL MAYERIK and STEVE GERBER
ARTIST — WRITER / EDITOR

JOE ROSEN, LETTERER | JAN COHEN, COLORIST | M. SKRENES, CO-SCENARIST

THIEF OF BAGMOM!

"DIDN'T WANT TO WAKE YOU," THE NOTE READ. "WENT SHOPPING. HOME BY SIX. -- BEV, PAUL, & WINDA."

AND THAT'S HOW A DUCK FINDS HIMSELF ALONE IN THE WANING LIGHT OF A CLEVELAND SATURDAY...

...AMID THE DEBRIS OF EIGHT WEEKS' COMMUNAL LIVING IN THE ONE-ROOM APARTMENT HE SHARES WITH THREE HAIRLESS APES.

HIS BLEARY EYES SURVEY THE FLOOR AND FIND IN ITS CLUTTER AN **ANALOGUE** TO HIS STATE OF **MIND.**

AN **OBSTACLE COURSE** OF EMPTY TIN CANS, CANDY WRAPPERS, ASSORTED ARTICLES OF DIRTY LAUNDRY.

REFUSE. RUBBISH. **DROSS.**

MENTAL NOTATION: MUST FIND A **JOB.** MUST GET THE MONEY TOGETHER TO BUY A **WASTE-BASKET...**

...AND CRAWL **IN.**

NAW, WAIT!

THESE FEELINGS ARE RUNNING A LITTLE **AMOK,** AREN'T THEY?

ALL THIS EXISTENTIAL **DE-SPAIR** OVER BEING EXCLUDED FROM A **SHOPPING** EXPE-DITION?

DISPROPORTIONATE!

BUT **SLIPPING** ON A STRAY **SOUP CAN...**

...CAREENING MADLY ABOUT THE ROOM, OFF-BALANCE, WITH A CUP OF **SCALDING** HOT COFFEE...

:WAAAUGH:

...NOW **THERE'S** SOMETHING **WORTH** GETTING UPSET ABOUT!

OR PERHAPS IT'S CAUSE FOR **REJOICING!** FOR THE FOWL REGAINS HIS **FOOTING**...

...WITHOUT HAVING SPILLED A **DROP!**

AND AFTER HIS RECENT BOUT WITH NEAR-TOTAL **NERVOUS COLLAPSE**...

...THAT'S AN **ACCOMPLISH-MENT!**

YOO-HOO, HOWARD -- WISE AND **SHINE!!**

HOWEVER SHORT-LIVED.

UHGE

KL

HOWARD'S **ROOMIES:** WINDA WESTER, PAUL SAME, AND BEVERLY SWITZLER.

HEH HEH

ACCIDENT.

UH...**HIYA,** HOWARD.

TSK TSK

WE, UH...DIDN'T FIGURE YOU'D BE **AWAKE** YET.

YEAH, WELL... I'M AWAKE... I'M **WET**... AN' I'M IN **PAIN.**

NOW WHAT'RE YA GONNA **DO** ABOUT IT?!

OH, YES, MM-HM, YOU'VE BEEN SWEEPING SUCH **WONG** HOURS WATEWY...!

PERSONALLY, DUCKY-- I'D LIKE TO OFFER SOME AID AND COMFORT... IF YOU'LL LET ME NEAR YOU.

C'MON-- WHATCHA SAY?

LET ME PAMPER YOU! YOU KNOW YOU'RE A SUCKER FOR SUCCOR.

SEE! IT FEELS GOOD TO BE TAKEN CARE OF, HUH?

NO...?

BLAST IT, BEV-- DON'T PATRONIZE ME !!

THIS PLACE IS BECOMIN' AS INTOLERABLE AS THE MENTAL HOSPITAL!!

NOT ONLY IS IT JUST AS CRAMPED AN' JUST AS SMELLY--

-- BUT YOU'VE BECOME AS CLOYINGLY SOLICITOUS AS ANY WARD NURSE!!

¡ulp¡ THAT OBVIOUS, HUH?

I'M SORRY, DUCKY... BUT DR. AVERY WARNED US TO HANDLE YOU... WELL, GENTLY.

UH-HUH... AN' IT MIGHT EVEN BE BELIEVABLE IF WE WEREN'T LIVIN' LIKE DEGENERATE PIONEERS!

DON'TCHA SEE, BEV-- YA CAN'T PAMPER SOMEBODY IN A PIGSTY!

OH! WHAT A CWUEL, STUPID THING TO SAY!!

IF YOU'WE SO MISEWABLE-- DO SOMETHING FOR YOURSEWF!

WE TOOK WHAT WITTLE BWEAD HE HAD-- AND BOUGHT SOME STUFF TO MAKE WIFE MORE PWEASANT AWOUND HEWE! SO THEWE!!

"SO THEWE," HUH?

WINDA... YOU OWE ME A CUP OF COFFEE.

WHA--?

TO REPLACE THE ONE I'M *WEARING.*

MAKE ME A CUP OF COFFEE, WINDA.

TREAT ME-- GENTLY.

N-NO! I WEFUSE!

WINDA... *A CUP OF* COFFEE... RIGHT NOW...

N-NO! WHY-- WHY *SHOULD* I--?

--OR I'LL *KILL YOU!!*

WIGHT, CHIEF--!!

OKAY, YA MUGS-- ANYBODY ELSE WANNA INFLICT ANY *GUILT* TRIPS-- EGO DAMAGE-- ANXIETY ATTACKS--?

C'MON-- I'LL TAKE YA *BOTH* ON!!

UH, *NO*-- THAT'S OKAY.

WHY DON'T WE LOOK AT THE STUFF WE *BOUGHT* INSTEAD...?

REALLY, HOWARD--WE FOUND SOME *NIFTY* BARGAINS.

DECORATIVE *AND* PRACTICAL, DUCKY.

FOR EXAMPLE, *THIS* LITTLE BEAUTY TO INTERPOSE BETWEEN YOUR *SLEEPING BAGS* AND THAT COLD, SPLINTERY *FLOOR!*

C'MERE, HOWARD--TAKE A *CLOSE* LOOK!

THE *PATTERNWORK* IN THIS CARPET IS *AMAZING!* I BET IT WAS WOVEN BY GENUINE PERSIAN *HANDS!*

SWELL! AT LEAST SOME CLOWN IN *PERSIA* FOUND A JOB!

OKAY, THEN, IF *YOU'RE* STILL TOO GROUCHY TO APPRECIATE IT, SEND *WINDA* IN--!

M-MAY I?

AAAAH, *G'WAN*--I'LL FEEL *SAFER* MAKIN' MY OWN COFFEE, ANYWAY.

I *KNOW* WHAT YOU'RE *THINKIN',* PAUL--

--BUT IT'S *NOT* MY LATENT MALE CHAUVINISM SURFACING.

I CONSIDER *YOU* A HOPELESS CASE, *TOO.*

OKAY, HOWARD, INSULT ME IF YOU *MUST*-- BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW I *SYMPATHIZE.*

I PREFER LIVING ALONE TO THESE CROWDED CONDITIONS, ALSO.

NATURALLY! THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU *MEN*-- NO *ADAPTIVE* CAPACITY WHATSOEVER!

YES! YOU'WE SO-- SO-- *WIGID!!*

WHOOSH

EEEEK!

OH, LORD...!

HAH...?

UH, C'MON, FELLAS-- UP OFF YOUR *THUMBS*, HUH?

HELP!!

MMM-HM-- *PWEASE!* THIS IS *TEWWIBWY* DISTWESSING!

B-BUT WHAT CAN WE *DO*??

I DON'T THINK AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS MAKE *HOUSE CALLS!*

THEN-- WIKE IT OR *NOT*-- WE'WE GOING ON A *TWIP!*

IT-- IT'S PICKING UP SPEED-- ALTITUDE-- PRETTY SOON THEY'LL BE OUT OF SIGHT *COMPLETELY!*

I HAVEN'T FELT SO STUPIDLY *IMPOTENT...*

...SINCE THE LAST TIME I TRIED TO FIGHT THE *POWER COMPANY* OVER MY ELECTRIC BILL!

YEAH, WELL... TRY'N SEE THE *BRIGHT* SIDE: AT LEAST NOTHIN' *ELSE* THAT HAPPENS TODAY--

--CAN BE ANY MORE *DISORIENTING* THAN *THIS!*

SUDDENLY--

KRAK!

I SHOULD'A *KNOWN*-- THE MINUTE I EVINCE EVEN A *TRACE* OF OPTIMISM--!

WE ARE COME TO CLAIM THE *CARPET*-- OR YOUR *HEADS!*

UNBEARABLY HACKNEYED... BUT *TRUE!* SURRENDER WIJID'S *RUG*-- OR YOUR *LIVES* ARE FORFEIT!

UH-HUH, WELL, *SORRY*, EFFENDIS! YA JUST MISSED THE *FLIGHT!*

MAYBE I CAN BOOK YA ON *STANDBY* FOR THE NEXT--

BY THE CALIPH'S BEARD--Y-YOU'RE A *DUCK!!*

SO! THERE IS *SORCERY* AS WELL AS *THIEVERY* AFOOT IN THIS LAND!

WHUK

ULP

INDEED! BUT WE HAVE SWORN AN *OATH*, ABDUL, TO RECOVER THE CARPET--

-- *REGARDLESS* OF THE RISK TO OURSELVES!

AYE, AND EVEN MAGIC THAT PUTS *WORDS* IN THE MOUTHS OF *FOWL* SHALL NOT DETER US!

WHERE IS THE CARPET??

SPEAK-- OR *DIE!!*

B-BUT HOWARD ALREADY *TOLD* YOU! IT *FLEW AWAY!* HONEST!

RIGHT OUT THAT *WINDOW!!*

NO! HE *LIES!* HOW COULD *THEY* HAVE KNOWN THE MAGIC WORD?

MMM... HARD TO *SAY.* PERHAPS THE WIZARD WHO GAVE VOICE TO THE DUCK?...

BAH! SLIT THAT ONE'S *THROAT!* THEN THE FOWL WILL *SURELY* ANSWER...!

GOTTA MOVE FAST-- AND *QUIETLY*-- WHILE THEY'RE ENGROSSED IN THEIR *DEBATE*--!

WE'VE NO TIME TO *WASTE* ON IDLE--

OWWWW

WHAP

THE "ELEMENT OF SURPRISE" THEY CALLED IT IN THE OLD PULP NOVELS.

THAT EPHEMERAL *ADVANTAGE*...

...WHICH SOMEHOW, ALMOST MYSTICALLY, IS SAID TO REVERSE THE **ODDS** AND MAKE **WARRIORS** OF CLODS.

UNTIL THIS *MOMENT*...

RUNCH

GNNPH

PASTE 'EM, PAULIE!!

THINK "EXTREME CRUELTY!"

...NEITHER HOWARD NOR PAUL LENT MUCH *CREDENCE* TO ITS REPUTED EFFICACY.

AND YET...

I--I THINK WE'RE *DOING* IT, HOWARD-- WE'RE ACTUALLY--

--*WINNING*!!

KLUDG

YAH-HOO!!

HEY, YOUSE INCONSIDERATE BUMS-- *HOLD DOWN THE NOISE THERE*!!

CHUNT

WHAP

YAIEEEE

THULK

I'M TRYIN' TA WATCH THE *RASSLIN'* ON TV!

I'LL TELL YA, YOU YOUTHS O' TODAY GOT NO *RESPECT* FOR--

;urp!

WELL I'LL BE! *INJUNS!!*

PEARL OF POOGROCH!

THEY'VE *SEEN* US, ABDUL!

AYE, ABDUL-- AND NEXT, THEY'LL BE SUMMONING THEIR *AUTHORITIES!*

WE MUST *FLEE!*

NO!! WAIT!! NOT *THAT* WAY!!

PAUL-- SHUT YER *YAP!!*

THERE ARE *LIMITS*--EVEN TO *CHARITY!*

WE HAVE *FAILED* OUR BELOVED *BAGMOM!*

"B-BUT, HOWARD," *PAUL STAMMERS*, "IT'S A FIVE-STORY *DROP!*

SO?! THESE CLOWNS'RE ARE ALWAYS LEAPIN' OUT OF WINDOWS AN' OVER WALLS IN THE *MOVIES!*

THEY ONLY GET HURT IF DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS *PUSHES* 'EM!

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS BEING REAL LIFE:

D. PIZZA PIZZA

PETE'S BAR & GRILL

PETE

ITALIAN SHOP

THEY'RE *DEAD!*

NOW WE'LL *NEVER* KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO BEV AND WINDA!

FINISH THE SENTENCE, PAUL: "AN IT'S ALL YOUR *FAULT!*"

I DIDN'T-- I MEAN, WHO *CARES* WHOSE FAULT IT IS?!

WE'VE GOTTA *THINK*, MAN, NOT MOUTH OFF AT--

WHOA! THE *LAMP!!*

I'M PROBABLY DEMENTED, BUT IF THE *RUG* WAS A MAGIC CARPET, *MAYBE--!*

A RUB OR TWO CAN'T *HURT*, RIGHT?

IF YOU *SAY* SO...!

SHOOM

H-HOWARD... I F-FEEL *FAINT...!*

*BUT DESPITE THE STEAMY RESPONSE TO PAUL'S MASSAGE NO **GENIE** APPEARS. ONLY--*

GOTCHA

HUH?! I WISHED TO BE TAKEN TO BEV AND WINDA...!

AN' ALL YA GOT WAS A SMOKE-SCREEN OF *WORDS.*

TOO BAD, PAUL. NICE *TRY.*

*HOWEVER, EVEN AS THE MESSAGE **DISPERSES**--*

RRIING

YEAH, YEAH--THIS'S THE PAUL SAME RESIDENCE.

I DUNNO-- *GRANT*, I GUESS!

WHY?

OH.

YEAH. THANKS.

WHAT *WAS* THAT...?

SOME *RADIO* STATION! I TOLD 'EM WHO WAS BURIED IN *GRANT'S TOMB...*

AND...?

WE WON A TRIP FOR TWO TA SOMEPLACE CALLED *BAGMOM.*

BAGMOM?! THE MAMELUKES SPOKE THAT NAME JUST BEFORE--!

LET'S MOVE!!

:waaaugh:

CHAPTER II CALLING ALL CARPETS!

MORNING: ATOP A MINARETTED MOSQUE, A PRIEST CALLS THE FAITHFUL TO PRAYER.

HIS FATE IN THE NEXT HALF-SECOND OR SO MAY BE TESTIMONY TO HIS OWN FAITH.

FOR ALLAH SPARES HIM A PAINFUL PLUNGE...

...AND GRANTS TO WINDA AND BEV A GUILT-FREE FIRST VIEW OF THIS STRANGE CITY WALLED OFF FROM TIME FOR SOME 1500 YEARS.

THIS CITY CALLED... BAGMOM!

THE RULER OF THIS PLACE STILL BEARS THE TITLE CALIPH, AND STILL RESIDES IN A PALACE.

AND, LIKE HIS ANCESTORS, HE EMPLOYS A LIVE-IN WIZARD.

TRULY, WIJID, 'TIS A FINE CARVING! YOU HAVE PLEASED ME.

BUT WHEN WILL IT BE DONE, O WIZARD?

ON THE MORROW, MAGNIFICENT ONE--

--IN TIME FOR THE FEAST, AS PROMISED!

BIG DEAL!

I CANNOT FATHOM, FATHER, WHY YOU WASTE YOUR TIME ON SUCH FRIVOLITIES!

THERE IS NO MAGIC IN THIS WOODEN MULE--

--NOR IN YOUR "WIZARD," EITHER!

HASSIM!!

WIJID! IT IS NOT YOUR PLACE...!

OH, I KNOW, I KNOW-- BUT IT'S SUCH A PITY, SIRE!

FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE IN CLEVELAND--

--AND HASSIM IS READY TO JUNK ALL OUR TRADITIONS!

IT SADDENS ME, THAT IS ALL I--

BY THE PROPHET!!

SIRE-- BEHOLD! 'TIS THE VERY CARPET I BESTOWED UPON HASSIM--

--ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA!

THE ONE HE-- HOW DID HE PUT IT--? HOCKED TO BUY A BROOKS BROTHERS SUIT?!

REMARKABLE! AND THESE FEMALES-- SURELY IT MUST BE DIVINE PROVIDENCE--!

WHAT'S HE SAYING?

I DUNNO! I'M ONWY FWUENT IN ENGWISH!

TWO SUCH BEAUTEOUS WESTERNERS DELIVERED TO MY PALACE--

--JUST AS MY SON THREATENS TO DEPART!

AH, YES-- PERFECT! SO FRAGILE, AND YET...

HANDS OFF, BUSTER!!

SMAK

...YET POSSESSED OF SUCH SPUNK!

RASHID-- TAKE THEM TO THE HAREM!

AS YOU WISH, GREAT SIRE!

WHAT THE--?! HEY!! YA BIG GORILLA--!!

IS THIS WISE, CALIPH?

SILENCE, WIZARD! IT IS ALLAH'S WILL!

MOREOVER, SHOULD THESE TWO ASSUAGE MY SON'S APPETITE FOR THINGS WESTERN... IT'S MY WILL, ALSO!

GWACIOUS!

THE AMERICANS ARE... SENSITIVE ABOUT SUCH MATTERS AS ABDUCTION OF NATIONALS.

MIDNIGHT!

AN AIR CASBAH TWIN-ENGINE LUXURY CRATE WHEEZES THROUGH THE SKIES OVER BAGMOM...

...DISCHARGING TWO TERRIFIED PASSENGERS!

THEY MIGHT'VE AT LEAST *WARNED* US THAT NO PLANES ARE ALLOWED TO *LAND* IN BAGMOM!

SO BIG DEAL-- THEY DON'T ENCOURAGE *TOURISM!*

JUST CLAM UP AN' *PLUMMET*, PAUL!!

WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT THEY *DO*-- THEIR CHUTES AFFORDING *SOME* BRAKE--

--BUT TOO *LITTLE* AT SO *LOW* AN ALTITUDE--

--TO MAKE THEIR *IMPACT* IN A BAGMOM *BACK ALLEY* ANYTHING RESEMBLING *GENTLE.*

H-HEY-- WE *MADE* IT! WE'RE *ALIVE!!*

waaugh

THUK

WE ***WON'T*** BE FOR LONG--UNLESS YOU CAN CONTAIN YOUR ***EXUBERANCE!***

SOMEBODY'S ***COMIN'***--AN' I DON'T THINK WE WANNA BE ***NOTICED*** YET!

:PSST: HOWARD--NEITHER DOES ***HE!*** SEE THAT ***PURSE*** HE'S CLUTCHING?

A ***THIEF,*** YOU FIGURE?

UH-***HUH.***

LOOK, I'M GONNA TAKE THE CHANCE--ASK FOR ***HELP.***

THE WORST HE CAN DO IS SAY "***NO,***" RIGHT?

TAP TAP

WRONG!

WHAT CRAVEN JACKAL DARES AMBUSH ALI WAZOO?!

FWASH!

:ulp:

SPEAK, DASTARD!

SPEAK YOUR SERPENTINE ***NAME*** FOR THE LAST TIME--

--BEFORE MY ***BLADE*** CARVES A HEART-SHAPED ***HOLE*** IN YOUR ***CHEST!***

AW, ***SHOOT!*** I FORGOT ALL ***ABOUT*** THE LANGUAGE BARRIER!

PAUL--THE ***LAMP?***

"START ***RUBBIN'***--UNLESS YA THINK THE LANGUAGE BARRIER'S GONNA STOP THAT ***DAGGER!***"

UH... TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES.

ONE MOMENT, PLEASE.

I GROW ***IRRITATED*** WITH YOUR ***BABBLE,*** FOOL!

SPEAK!!

WHO ***ARE***--

:gasp:

YOU SEEK TO STAY MY HAND WITH *TRICKS*?!

I FEAR NOT YOUR FEEBLE ATTEMPTS AT *SORCERY*, YOUTH!

IT *WORKED*! I UNDERSTAND HIM-- HIS *SPEECH*, ANYWAY!

LET'S HOPE THE VICE IS *VERSA*!

LISTEN, FRIEND-- WE'RE NOT LOOKIN' FOR TROUBLE-- JUST FOR A COUPLE O' GIRLS WHO DISAPPEARED FROM CLEVELAND ON A *FLYING CARPET*!

YEAH-- REALLY! *HONEST*!

WE WERE HOPING YOU MIGHT *HELP* US!

LOOK-- YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF WE'RE NOT *LOCALS*!

THIS... IS TRUE.

AND FROM WHAT OUR *PILOT* TOLD US, OUTSIDERS ARE *AT LEAST* AS UNWELCOME AS THIEVES IN BAGMOM!

THERE'S THE SCOUNDREL! WE'VE *FOUND* HIM!

UH-OH...!

THE CALIPH'S *POLICE*!

TRULY, WE *ARE* AS BROTHERS NOW!

HUH...?

GUILT BY *ASSOCIATION*, PAUL!

CHEESE IT!!

HALT!! HALT IN THE NAME OF THE CALIPH!!

SEZ *YOU*!

AAEIIII!

THIS WAY, MY FRIENDS!

DOWN *THERE*?! B-BUT--

TRUST ME!

YOU'VE LITTLE *CHOICE.*

WE MUST BE CERTAIN WE'VE ELUDED THE *POLICE*--

--BEFORE WE PRESS *ON!*

ON *WHERE*?!

THIS IS A *DEAD END!*

FOUR WALLS AND ONLY *ONE* EXIT--

--THE WAY WE CAME *IN!*

YOU ARE *MISTAKEN*, COMRADE. YOUR DUCK-SUITED *DWARF* UNDER-STANDS BETTER.

:UHHN:

I'LL *REFRAIN* FROM COMMENT ON THAT LAST REMARK--

--IF I CAN GET AN *ASSIST* FROM YOU BOZOS!

*HOWEVER, EVEN WITH PAUL'S GRUNTING ADDED TO HOWARD'S **OWN**, THE RING-- AND THE STONE **ATTACHED** TO IT-- REFUSES TO BUDGE.*

ZILCH! IT'S LIKE TRYING TO LIFT THE *EARTH* BY THE BACK OF ITS *NECK!*

NATURALLY.

BECAUSE THE DOOR WILL *OPEN* ONLY FOR ONE WHO KNOWS THE *MAGIC WORDS:*

TU-AHLBIF-PATIZ--

SPESHULZAWZ-LETTUZ-CHI'IZ--

PEEKLZON-YUNZON-AHSEZME-SEET--

BUHNN!!

WHOOMPH

:waaaugh:

BEHOLD!

THUNK

THE PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT OF *SEVEN GENERATIONS* OF BAGMOM'S THIEVING CLASS--

--THE *UNDERGROUND RAILWAY!*

OASIS EXP 7

OYEA, OYEA!

NUMBER SEVEN OASIS EXPRESS TO THE *BAZAAR*-- HOMES OF THE *WEALTHY*-- AND THE NORTH OASIS-- ARRIVING ON TRACK TWO!

OASIS EXP 7

IT'S-- A *SUBWAY?!*

OH, *MUCH* MORE THAN *THAT!*

IT BEGAN AS A TUNNEL FROM OUR HIDEOUT IN THE *MOUNTAINS* TO THE VERY CENTER OF THE *CITY!*

A MOST *EFFICIENT* MEANS OF TRANSPORTING *BOOTY*, I ASSURE YOU!

SINCE THEN, WE'VE DUG ARTERIES BENEATH *ALL* THE MAJOR THOROUGHFARES AND ROBBED BAGMOM *BLIND!*

WE'RE CURRENTLY TUNNELLING UNDER THE PALACE *ITSELF!*

OASIS EXP 7

THEN THE *POLICE* DON'T KNOW--?

NO ONE IN BAGMOM SAVE THE THIEVES THEMSELVES IS AWARE OF THE RAILWAY'S EXISTENCE.

EXCEPT *US*, YOU MEAN?

AH, YES-- A THOUSAND *PARDONS!* NO ONE EXCEPT YOURSELVES!

BUT IF YOU VALUE YOUR *TONGUES*-- WE HAVE NAUGHT TO FEAR.

SHORTLY, JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS--

PRAISES BE TO THE ALL-MERCIFUL! *ABU HO DADI* IS AT THE OASIS!

ABU HO DADI-- YOUNGEST, HANDSOMEST, AND MOST *DARING* OF ALL THE THIEVES!

ABU HO DADI-- WHOSE EARS, OR THEIR *PROXIES*, HEAR EVERY WORD SPOKEN IN BAGMOM-- WHOSE *LIPS* HAVE BRUSHED THOSE OF ALL THE CITY'S MOST *EXQUISITE* BEAUTIES--

--AND WHOSE *EYES* CURRENTLY *BULGE* AT THE SIGHT OF--

NO, *NO*, PRINCE OF ROGUES-- I *BEG* YOU! SPARE THEM-- AND, INCIDENTALLY, *MYSELF!*

THEY ABETTED MY FLIGHT FROM THE PALACE *TROOPS!*

INTRUDERS!!

KILL!!

ALI WAZOO SAID YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US LOCATE TWO AMERICAN WOMEN WHO, AH, *FLEW IN* THIS MORNING.

HOW DID THESE WOMEN "FLY IN?"

:heh: WOULDJA BELIEVE-- *CARPET*?

WHY WOULD I *NOT* BELIEVE? YOUR WOMEN ARE VERY *FORTUNATE*, YOU KNOW.

ARRIVING THUS, THEY ARE ALMOST *CERTAINLY* IN THE CUSTODY OF--

ABU! DO YOU *HEAR*?!

*THE OUTLAW FALLS **SILENT**, HIS EARS ATTUNED TO THE SHIFTING OF EACH GRAIN OF DESERT **SAND**.*

*THEN-- HE **DASHES** UP THE DUNE!*

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

SURE... LET'S GO.

*AND, AT THE **CREST** OF THE WAVE OF GRAINS...*

BY ALL THE *STARS!!*

'TIS MY SWORN ENEMY *PRINCE HASSIM*-- VILEST OF DESERT RATS--!

LIAR! BLASPHEMER! DISGRACE TO HIS *FATHER* AND ALL BAGMOM!

:tsk: YEAH, THEY DON'T MAKE PRINCES LIKE THEY *USEDTA*.

--AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS IN *ROXXON'S* BEHALF, PRINCE HASSIM.

YOUR FATHER'S A *MIGHTY* STUBBORN MAN.

HOW WELL I *KNOW!*

BUT YOU *DO* PREDICT HE'LL *RELENT*-- ASSIGN US EXPLORATION RIGHTS?

OIL IS BAGMOM'S *FUTURE*, MR. PETRIE. YOU, I, AND THE ROXXON CORPORATION ALL *KNOW* THAT.

MY FATHER, *TOO*, CAN BE PERSUADED EVENTUALLY. BUT HE MUST BE TAKEN EVERY STEP BY *HAND*.

WHAT APPROACH DO *YOU* SUGGEST?

COME TO THE *BANQUET* TOMORROW EVE. BRING *GIFTS*.

HE HAS TODAY SEEN TWO FINE SPECIMENS OF AMERICAN WOMANHOOD.

IF HE CAN BE MADE TO ADMIRE YOUR TECHNOLOGY *HALF* SO MUCH--!

UNDER-STOOD.

AND IF HE *CANNOT* LOVE COLOR TV AS HE DOES HIS NEWLY-ACQUIRED "BEV" AND "WINDA"--!

WELL, HE'S *ON* IN YEARS-- THINGS *HAPPEN*--!

;waaaugh;

H-HOWARD! *NO!!* WHAT'RE YOU *DOING*?!

YOU HEARD 'IM! HE'S GOT BEV AN' WINDA!

B-BUT--!

NOT SO *FAST*, CHUMS! STICK AROUND A MINUTE!

DIDN'T YOU FINE, UPSTANDIN' AMERICANS HEAR WHAT THIS YOYO *SAID*?!

IT-- IT'S A *DUCK!!*

HIS *PA* JUST "ACQUIRED" TWO O' YOUR *COUNTRYWOMEN!*

THAT'S A *NO-NO*, FELLAS!

A *TALKING* DUCK...!

A TALKING *AMERICAN* DUCK! AND MY FATHER IS *OBSESSED* WITH SUCH CURIOSITIES!

DRIVE ME TO THE CITY *GATES*, WON'T YOU, PETRIE?

HAH?

YOUR LEASES ARE IN THE *BAG*, I THINK.

WAAAAUGH

BECAUSE I *HOPED* SOMETHING LIKE THIS MIGHT OCCUR! ALLAH *SMILES* UPON US.

YOU WILL SEE...IN DUE *COURSE.*

WE COULD'VE *TAKEN* THOSE THREE! WHY--?!

CHAPTER III

THE DESERT SONG-- AND DANCE!

THE **GREAT HALL** OF THE PALACE OF BAGMOM IS A MARVEL OF MARBLE AND JADE AND GOLD AND IVORY AND-- TONIGHT-- DRINK, FOOD, AND **FLESH!**

THE MUSIC, THE DANCERS, THE ARCHITECTURE LEAP AND BEND AND CURL AND **SWOOP** AND UNDULATE IN CURVILINEAR EXPRESSIONS OF REJOICING.

ARE YOU **HAPPY**, MY LOVELIES? HAS YOUR LORD AND MASTER, THE **CALIPH**, WARMED YOUR HEARTS AND FILLED YOUR TAUT BELLIES WITH THIS FEAST OF FEASTS?

OH, **YES**, GOOD AND MIGHTY ONE! YES! **YES!**

;sigh; HOW YOU **GUSH**, MY SWEET.

STILL... YOU ARE **CORRECT.**

NOW LET US SEE IF MY **MAGICIAN** CAN LIKEWISE GRATIFY ME! **WIJID...?**

NOT **LIKEWISE**, MAJESTY... BUT **EQUALLY**, I PRAY! **BEHOLD!**

THE HUMBLEST BEAST OF BURDEN--AND THE *STUBBORN-EST*-- YOUR MAJESTY'S FAVORITE--

--ENCRUSTED WITH EMERALDS AND RUBIES--ITS TRUE *NOBILITY* REVEALED!

HAVE YOU TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR *SENSES*, SORCERER-- *MOCKING* ME THUS?!

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE *CASHBOX* AFFIXED TO THE PEDESTAL??

EXPLAIN-- OR I'LL HAVE YOUR *HEAD*!!

IT-- IT WAS *HASSIM'S* IDEA, MOST ILLUSTRIOUS MASTER!

HE SUGGESTED WE *DISPLAY* THE CARVING IN THE *FOUNTAIN-SQUARE*--

--AND, FOR A *PRICE*, ALLOW CHILDREN TO *SIT* ASTRIDE IT WHILE THEIR *MOTHERS* TENDED TO THE *LAUNDRY*!

WIJID SPEAKS THE *TRUTH*, FATHER.

BUT I HUMBLY BEG WE *BOTH* BE SPARED YOUR TERRIBLE RAGE...

...AND THAT I BE PERMITTED TO *BANISH* YOUR DISPLEASURE WITH THESE *OTHER* GIFTS.

LO, FATHER! TELEVISION! STEREO! DIGITAL CLOCKS! BLENDERS! ELECTRIC *CAN OPENERS*!

ALL THE FRUITS OF *PROGRESS*, GREAT KING-- COURTESY OF *ROXXON*.

AH, YES-- YOUR *OIL* FRIENDS!

BUT, HASSIM... WE'VE NO *USE* FOR SUCH DEVICES IN BAGMOM.

WE LEAD A *SIMPLE* LIFE HERE... MAKING OUR *OWN* MUSIC AND MERRIMENT.

BESIDES, WE'VE NO *ELECTRICITY*, AND--

NOW, NOW, FATHER-- THESE ARE MERE *TRINKETS!*

PREPARE TO GAZE UPON ONE OF THE WEST'S *TRUE WONDERS!*

ENTER!!

MASTER OF MERCY! THIS IS A *PRESENT*?! AN INFANT'S *COFFIN*?!

HARDLY, SIRE-- SEE FOR YOURSELF!

GREAT HEAVENS!!

:choke:

:waaugh:

:gasp:

NOW *THIS* IS IMPRESSIVE! I'D HEARD OF PERDUE'S GIANT *CHICKENS*-- AND OF BUTTER-BALL *TURKEYS*, BUT--!!

I HOPE THAT MEANS WE'RE GONNA BE *PALS!* I COULD *USE* ONE IN THIS BURG!

BY THE WAY... YOU GOT A *LIGHT*?

:gasp: *IT TALKS?!*

TRULY, THIS *IS* A MAGNIFICENT CREATURE!!

FAR SUPERIOR TO EVEN A *JEWELED* MULE!

WHICH AIN'T SAYIN' *MUCH*, BUT--!

AND MY *FRIENDS*, FATHER...?

I AM *SOFTENING*, HASSIM. GIVE ME TIME.

FOR THE NONCE, I PREFER ***DIVERSION*** FROM THESE MATTERS OF STATE.

BRING ON THE NEW HAREM ***DUET!***

CLAP CLAP

GO! SING! DANCE! OR ***HEADS*** ROLL!

RASHID MAKES A CONVINCING ***CASE***, HUH?

MM-HMM, YES HE ***DOES!***

WET'S GET ***HOPPING***-- OR WE'LL BE DANCING ***TOPWESS.***

FWOM THE CWAVICLES ***UP!***

A-ONE, AN' A-***TWO***, AN'--

WHAT A CURIOUS ***MELODY!***

DA- DA- DA- DA- DA- ***DA***-- ***BOOP!***

C'MON ♫ AWONG AN WISTEN TO TO-- THE WUWWABY OF BWOADWAY! ♫♫

THAT'S FUNNY-- ***I*** DON'T HEAR ANY MELODY.

FATHER, I AM ***LOATHE*** TO DISTRACT YOU FROM THE ENTERTAINTMENT-- BUT THESE ***DRILLING*** PERMITS...

PLEASE, HASSIM, CAN IT NOT ***WAIT*** A MOMENT?

KAWATE KICKS, NUNCHAKU STICKS-- THE WUWWABY OF BWOADWAY--! ♫♪♪♩♫

FATHER, MY FRIENDS MUST ***DEPART*** SHORTLY...!

HASSIM, ***INDULGE*** ME! I'M AN OLD MAN--!

YEAH-- ***BUG OFF,*** SONNY!

YEAH, THINGS ***HAPPEN*** WHEN YOU'RE OLD.

PEOPWE SCWEAMING IN HOWWIBLE PAIN-- THE MUGGERS WUNNING WAMPANT--!

ARE *THOSE* REALLY THE *LYRICS*??

YOU BEEN TO NEW YORK WATEWY?

YOU WIN.

THE *FOWL* SEEMS TO THINK YOU MEAN ME *HARM*, HASSIM!

YOUR OWN *FATHER!*

YES, HOW AMUSINGLY *ABSURD.*

SIGN HERE.

THE WUMBLE OF THE SUBWAY TWAINS--!

AND, AS IF ON CUE--

CHOOM

HA!EEEE

*PAUL, HO DAD! AND THE **THIEVES** STAGE THEIR **UPRISING** FROM THE UNDER-GROUND RAILWAY!*

waaaugh

WE COME AS *PATRIOTS*, GREAT SIRE-- LOYAL SUBJECTS WHO SEEK ONLY TO *SAVE* BAGMOM-- AND *YOU*--

--FROM THE GREEDY CLUTCHES OF YOUR *SON!!*

HO DADI'S ON THE *LEVEL*, WHISKERS! HASSIM'S BOUGHT OFF YOUR ARMY WITH *PETRODOLLARS...!*

BUT... TO WHAT *PURPOSE?*

TO ENRICH *HIMSELF*, O NOBLE AND LUSTROUS ONE--

--AT *YOUR* EXPENSE AND THAT OF YOUR *PEOPLE!*

FIND HIM, SIRE! *ASK* HIM IF HE OFFERED YOUR *SUBJECTS* AS CHEAP *LABOR*--

--IF HE ARRANGED FOR *HIMSELF* TO BE THE SOLE RECIPIENT OF BAGMOM'S OIL PROFITS!

HASSIM!

SHOW YOURSELF, DOG OF A TRAITOR!!

THE CUR HAS *FLED!*

I-- I DON'T SEE BEV AND WINDA, EITHER!

Y-YOU DO NOT THINK *HASSIM...?*

THE *THIEVES* HAVE OVER-RUN THE WHOLE *PALACE!*

WHERE COULD HE--?

VRROOM

WHAT THE--?!

A *MOTOR*-- IN *BAGMOM*?!?

IT'S *HASSIM!*

AND YOU'LL NEVER *CATCH* ME! :HA HA HA:

I HAVE ALL THE FRUITS OF *U.S. TECHNOLOGY* AT MY DISPOSAL!

OH, DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL!

THE FLESH OF MY FLESH-- A *SELL-OUT!*

HEWP! HEWP!!

D-DUCKY!!

AND I'VE GOT THE *CHICKS*, TOO! SO DON'T TRY ANY *TRICKS*, SEE?

TEN-FOUR, GOOD BUDDIES!

YALE

:waaugh: C.B. TALK! THAT *DOES* IT! *NOW* I'M INSULTED!

FUN-*NEE*, HOWARD!

BIG TIME *YOKS!*

DON'T YOU REALIZE-- WE'VE COME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO LOSE THE GIRLS *FOREVER*??

THERE'S NO OTHER *AIR-CRAFT* IN BAGMOM! NO WAY TO--

WRONG!!

AS WRONG AS HASSIM, WHEN HE CLAIMED MY CREATIONS HARBOR NO *MAGIC!*

"BEHOLD-- ONE THIN *DINAR!*"

AND *SUDDENLY--*

HEE HAW

HEE HAW

*IN AMAZEMENT AND AESTHETIC REVULSION, THE ASSEMBLAGE WATCHES... AS THE MULE **TAKES WING!!***

NORMALLY, I'D THINK TWICE ABOUT A RIDE ON A *MERRY-GO-ROUND!*

BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING NORMAL ABOUT *THIS* SITUATION--

-- I MUST'A *BLINKED* AN' *MISSED* IT!

HEE HAW

*PADDLING THROUGH THE NIGHT SKY WITH ASTONISHING SPEED-- FOR AN AERODYNAMIC ABSURDITY--THE MULE SOON **OVERTAKES** THE STUNNED HASSIM!*

CURSES!! BUT YOU CANNOT FORCE ME *DOWN!*

THE *GIRLS*-- REMEMBER??

AND THEY'RE *NOT* WEARING SAFETY BELTS!

YOU *SLIME!!*

YOU TRY ANY *AERO-BATICS*, AN' I'LL--

HEEHAW

WE WON'T EVEN GIVE 'IM THE *CHANCE*, ACE!

C'MON, WINDA!

OH, *GWACIOUS!!*

C-CAREFUL, TOOTS-- IT'S A *LONG* DROP!

I-- I *CAN'T!* I'M AFWAID OF *HEIGHTS!!*

HASSIM'S OUT FOR *BLOOD!* TAKE MY HAND!

UNFORTU-NATELY, KID-- THERE'S NO *CHOICE* ANYMORE!

I-- I'LL *TWY!!*

:OOOh: I CAN'T *WOOK...!*

NO! *NO!!* I CAN'T HAVE OUT-WITTED THEM ALL-- ONLY TO BE THWARTED BY A *DUCK!!*

I'LL *KILL* YOU FOR THIS-- WEB-FOOTED FREAK!!

BUT BEFORE HASSIM CAN LEAP ASTRIDE THE FLYING STEED...

HOWARD, YOU *DID* IT! YOU OUT-MANEUVERED HIM-- ON A *MULE!*

HEEHAW

SO... WHY ARE YOU WOOPING *BACK*, FOR CWYING OUT WOUD??

TA KNOCK HIM OUTTA THE *SKY*-- THAT'S WHY!!

NOT *LIKELY*, FOWL! NOT WHEN YOU AND YOUR MULE--

-- WILL SHORTLY BE RIDDLED WITH *LEAD!*

THAKOW

HOWWOWS! HE'S FIWING ON US!!

THINK FAST, DUCKY-- PLEASE!

DON'T PANIC, LADIES.

WIJID DID OUR THINKIN' FOR US!

BZZZ

MISSILE LAUNCHER

OH! WOOK AT THAT!

IT'S A WITTLE WOBOT!

AND IT THWOWS KNIVES!!

INDEED IT DOES...

CHUK CHUK CHUK

...AND WITH DEADLY ACCURACY!

!

HEE HAW HEE HAW

SAY G'NIGHT, SWEET PRINCE!

IT'S ALL OVER!

OH, DWAT! HE SEEMS TO HAVE SET THE PWANE DOWN SAFEWY!

NOT TO WORRY, KIDDO. IF I KNOW MY GEOGRAPHY, HE'LL GET HIS!

HE LANDED ACROSS THE BORDER FROM BAGMOM...

...IN ISRAEL!

HEE HAW

EPILOG: AFTER THE EXPLANATIONS, THE FEASTING, THE **FAREWELLS**...

GUESS IT DIDN'T WORK OUT **TOO** BADLY, ALL IN ALL...!

IT WAS **NICE** OF THE CALIPH TO ARRANGE FOR OUR PASSAGE HOME, THIS MEDITERRANEAN **CRUISE**, AND EVERYTHING, HUH?

YEAH, HE WAS **DECENT** ENOUGH--

--ONCE WE TALKED 'IM OUTTA HAVIN' ME **BRONZED**, AN'--

HOWARD! BEV! HUWWY! IT'S VEWY UWGENT!

PAUL IS WUBBING THE **WAMP** AGAIN!!

IT'S HIS WAST **WISH!** I TWIED TO **DISSUADE** HIM, BUT--

TOO LATE **NOW!** LOOK!

HOWEVER...

LECHEROUS CUR! NO!!

:ulp:

THIS IS... UH...

...**VERY** EM-BARRASSING.

:TEE HEE:

WHAT DID YOU **ASK** FOR-- THAT COULD OFFEND A **GENIE'S** SENSIBILITIES

I'D... REALLY RATHER NOT **SAY.**

OH... DON'T **FWET,** PAUL.

I'M EXTWA-ORDINAWIWY **FWATTERED,** ANYHOW.

FIN

HOWARD THE DUCK

30¢ CC

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK

TM

WELCOME TO THE MEDITERRANEAN'S LAST RESORT!

THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF DR. BONG!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR * GENE COLAN ARTIST * KLAUS JANSON INKER/COLORIST * IRV WATANABE LETTERER

THE ISLAND OF DR. BONG!

FOLLOWING THEIR ADVENTURE IN EXOTIC **BAGMOM**,* HOWARD, BEV, PAUL, AND WINDA SAIL **HOMEWARD**...

:PSST:
:PSST:

OH, **LET** THEM WHISPER! WHO **CARES?**

BACK IN **HIGH SCHOOL,** THE BOYS USE TO CALL ME "THUNDER-THIGHS"...

...AT THE TOP OF THEIR ADOLESCENT **LUNGS!**

*SEE HTD ANNUAL #1, NOW ON SALE.--S.G.

:PSST:
:PSST:
:PSST:
:PSST:
:PSST:

...ALL EXPENSES **PAID** BY THE GRATEFUL **CALIF** WHOSE CITY THEY SAVED.

:WHEW:

YEAH, OKAY... YOU'RE **RIGHT.** IT'D BE **STUPID** TO LET A FEW ENVIOUS **MUTTERERS** MAR OUR GOOD TIME!

ONLY I THINK THEY WERE HISSIN' ABOUT **ME!**

ACTUALLY, I SUPPOSE WE'RE AN *ITEM*--BUT WHAT OF IT?

I'D RATHER DEVOTE MY ATTENTION TO THE ENDLESS *SEA* OUT THERE.

YEAH--IT'S BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT? CALM, QUIET...

...GENTLY LAPPING AT THE HULL OF THE SHIP.

I *NEEDED* A CRUISE LIKE THIS TA CLEAR MY *HEAD*, BEV.

I HAVEN'T HEARD THOSE *VOICES* IN MY HEAD SINCE WE SET SAIL.

*"IT'S DONE US **BOTH** GOOD, DUCKY. THIS SHIP IS LIKE A FLOATING **CITY**, BUT **DETACHED** FROM THE REST OF REALITY.*

*"ALL THE **CONVENIENCES** OF HOME, DRUGSTORES, BOUTIQUES, THEATERS--AND NONE OF THE **HASSLES**, Y' KNOW?"*

YEAH...IN THE EVENT OF *NUCLEAR DISASTER* THE ENTIRE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM--

--COULD BE PRESERVED ABROAD THIS SHIP FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

WHA'--?

NOTHIN'...!

ANYWAY, I *PROMISED* MYSELF-- NO HEAVY THOUGHTS THIS TRIP.

DITTO! KEEP IT LIGHT-- EVERYTHING ***MELLOW***-- NOTHING--

--DISRUPTIVE.

ZONK

H-HOWARD, ARE YOU **ALL RIGHT?**

MELLOW...

HE SIGHS DREAMILY. HIS EYES ROLL UPWARD AS IF IN ECSTATIC CONTEMPLATION. HE **LISTS** TO AND FRO.

SPLASH

AND THEN HE TAKES THE **PLUNGE!**

AND SO IT ARRIVES AT LAST: THAT AWFUL MOMENT HE'S EXPECTED--AND **DREADED**-- SINCE HIS **CHILDHOOD.**

SPLAT

AND THERE'S NOTHING TO DO BUT MAKE THE EMBARRASSING **ADMISSION.**

GLUB **B-BEV-- I-- I CAN'T SWIM!**

WH-WHAT? BUT THAT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!** ALL DUCKS CAN--

OH, **HOWARD!** MY POOR **BABY!**

OH, **GWACIOUS--** THIS IS ALL **MY** FAULT!

IT WAS **MY** SHUFFLEBOARD PUCK THAT **STWUCK** HIM!

SOMEBODY-- HELP!!

I'M **SOWWY,** HOWARD! I JUST DON'T KNOW MY OWN **STWENGTH** SOMETIMES!

BUT DON'T **WOWWY!** WE'LL SAVE YOU!

UH, WINDA-- I CAN **APPRECIATE** THE IMPULSE TA BUILD DRAMATIC **TENSION,** AN' ALL...

GET **WEADY!** HEWE COMES THE WIFE-PWESERVER!

EEEEK!

BUT, SEE, I'M **DROWNING.**

AN' WHATEVER YOU'RE **SCREAMIN'** ABOUT, IT **CAN'T** BE AS **URGENT** AS--

waaaugh

IT SLITHERS LIKE A SNAKE, SWIMS LIKE AN EEL, SCREECHES LIKE METAL AGAINST METAL...

...AND WEARS A TOP HAT LIKE FRED ASTAIRE!

NEEEEEEEZ

A SEA SERPENT WITH BREEDING?

PERHAPS. BUT THE PASSENGERS AND CREW OF THE S.S. DAMNED ARE CONCERNED WITH MATTERS OTHER THAN THE CREATURE'S SOCIAL STANDING.

ITS SIZE, FOR EXAMPLE.

AND THE FACT THAT ITS SCALY BODY SEEMS TO BE ONE LONG, SINUOUS MUSCLE...

...CAPABLE OF COILING ABOUT THE SHIP AND CRUSHING IT, EFFORTLESSLY.

NEEEEEEEZ

WINDA-- THE LIFE-PRESERVER-- PLEASE!!

KLONK

S.S. DAMNED

I MUST BE THE VERY *PERSONIFICATION* OF THE RAGE TO LIVE.

HIT ME, DUNK ME, *INSULT* ME--I'LL STILL *HANG IN* THERE.

I WONDER *WHY*--?!

DECKSIDE:

BLAM

THIS'S LIKE HUNTING ELEPHANTS WITH A *CAP PISTOL!*

IT'D TAKE A *HOWITZER* TO PUT A HOLE IN THAT THAT!

M-MAYBE WE CAN *CHARM* IT! I USED TO PLAY THE *RECORDER*--!

THE CHURNING WATERS. MEANWHILE, TOSS HOWARD UP CLOSER TO THE MONSTER, WHERE HIS BEMUSED GAZE FIXES UPON:

A *PLAQUE*-- RIVETTED INTO ITS *HIDE*--!

TO GIVE SERPENT PLEASURE PRESS HERE

"TO GIVE... PLEASURE... *WHAT??*

IT

BZZZZZ

NOTHIN' TO LOSE BY *TRYIN'*, I GUESS--!

ZZZZZ

*INSTANTLY, THE CREATURE'S EYES **LIGHT UP!** AND THE ENDS OF HIS MOUTH CURL INTO A... **SMILE!***

AND, AS IF THE SHIP HAD NEVER **EXISTED**, THE MONSTER **ABANDONS** ITS ATTACK AND PLOWS OFF THROUGH THE WATER, THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF ITS **BODY** QUIVERING WITH **DELIGHT**.

NEEZ! NEEZ! NEEZ!

SO...IT MUST BE LIFE'S LITTLE **SURPRISES** THAT KEEP ME GOING...

GEE! IF I'D DROWNED, I'D NEVER HAVE LEARNED THAT SEA SERPENTS COME EQUIPPED WITH **PLEASURE-CENTER STIMULATORS!**

HOWARD!! CATCH!!

HUH--?

OH!!

NUTS! ALMOST FORGOT WHERE I **WAS!**

ATTAWAY, MATE-- JUST STAY LOOSE! WE'LL HAUL YA RIGHT **UP!**

YOU'RE A **HERO**, FELLA!

OTHERWISE, YOU'D'A LET ME **SINK**, HUH, CAP'N?

NOW, NOW...NO NEED FOR **SARCASM**, SON. WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE BACK WITH US, SAFE 'N' SOUND!

UH-HUH.

SAFE 'N' SOUND-- EXCEPT FOR THE **TARANTULAS** DANCING THE **POLKA** IN MY **STOMACH!**

DON'T ASK ME **HOW** --BUT THINGS'RE GONNA GET **WORSE** BEFORE THIS CRUISE IS **OVER!**

DESPITE THE DUCK'S PREMONITION...

...THE VOYAGE OF THE **DAMNED** CONTINUES UNINTERRUPTED PAST **SUNDOWN** AND INTO THE MOONLIT **NIGHT.**

MISS SWITZLER, MR. SAME, MISS WESTER-- **WELCOME!**

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. NICE OF YOU TO **INVITE** US.

MM-HMM-- IT'S A **WAWITY** FOR US TO ATTEND A FORMAL SHINDIG!

YES, WELL... **DO** RELAX, ENJOY YOURSELVES... DINNER WILL BE SERVED SHORTLY.

YEAH...HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR AVERAGE DUCK GET THE **OPPORTUNITY...**

...TO DRESS UP THE **PENGUIN?**

DUM

OKAY, FOLKS-- EVERYBODY **DANCE!**

SHALL WE TRIP A LITTLE LIGHT FANTASTIC, DUCKY?

I-I-I-- WANNA ROCK'N' ROLL ALL NIIIGHT--

SURE-- WHY **NOT!**

NOTHIN' MORE **EXHILARATING** THAN HARD ROCK PLAYED ON PIANO, BASS, AND DRUMS.

REMINDS ME OF MY BEST FRIEND'S **BAR MITZVAH.**

WHEN THE BAND **CONCLUDES** ITS STODGY SET...

DINNERTIME, SWEETS.

HOPE THE **FOOD'S** BETTER THAN THE **MUSIC.**

I DON'T CARE IF IT'S RECYCLED **SOYBURGERS!** I'M STARVED!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOUR FIRST **COURSE.**

DON'T PROLONG THE **SUSPENSE,** PAL. WHAT'VE WE **GOT?**

DUCK L'ORANGE, SIR. EXQUISITE, IS IT NOT?

GULP!

MMMPPH

H-HOWARD ...IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN **DO?**

MM-MMPH

WHICH TRANSLATES ROUGHLY TO: "**YES!** CLEAR ME A PATH, AND STRANGLE THE **CHEF!**"

BUT THE FOWL IS **LONG GONE** BEFORE SHE CAN ACT, CLUTCHING HIS BILL, RACING AS IF ON **WHEELS...**

MMGLURRG

BEV GETS THE **GIST,** IF NOT THE SPECIFICS...

...TO A SECLUDED CORNER OF THE UPPER DECK...

AAAAAUGH

...WHERE, AT LAST, HE MAY RETCH IN **PEACE.**

TH-THAT DID IT... **TOTAL** ENERVATION! ...I CAN FEEL THE SPIDERS CRAWLING OUTTA MY **INTESTINES**...

...DOWN MY RUBBERY **LEGS**...

...AN' INTO THE DECK! **CATHARSIS!**

I MEAN...HOW MUCH WORSE CAN IT **GET,** AFTER BEING EXPECTED TO ENGAGE IN **CASUAL CANNIBALISM?!**

GOTTA...LIE DOWN... TOO QUEASY TO **THINK,** LET ALONE **STAND...!**

YEAH... THIS'S BETTER...

BREATHE IN THAT BRACING **SALT AIR**...KEEP MY EYES ON THAT INDIGO SKY, DAPPLED WITH **SILVER...!**

ONCE YA HIT THE **PITS** IT CAN ONLY **IMPROVE,** RIGHT?

SUDDENLY..

CRRRAAASSHH

AN IMMENSE CHUNK OF **GRANITE,** DROPPED FROM **NOWHERE,** IMBEDS ITSELF IN THE DECK.

TH-THIS...IS **NOT** AN IMPROVEMENT...!

FROM THE PITS...TO THE **QUARRY?**

:WAAAGH:

INCHES...THREE, MAYBE FOUR... FIVE, **TOPS!**

TH-THAT'S ALL THAT STOOD BETWEEN **ME** AND **WAFER-HOOD!**

MY GOD... **WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?**

HOWARD!! WHAT HAPPENED??

WE HEARD A TERRIBLE **CRASH,** AND...

CAPTAIN, WHERE COULD IT HAVE **COME** FROM?

IS IT A **METEOR,** DO YOU THINK, OR--?

I DON'T **KNOW,** MR. SAME. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING **LIKE** IT.

WELL, YA CAN ALL REST **EASY** NOW...

THE BOULDER IS **UNARMED.**

MAYBE IT'S AN **EGG.** MAYBE I **LAID** IT.

♪ LA-DE-DA ♪

MY INCU-BATORY POSITION **ATOP** IT IS AWFULLY INCRIMI-NATING.

BUT, NO...IT'S SO **BIG!**

AN' I'M A **MALE!**

SO IT **MUST'VE** FALLEN FROM UP--

--THERE.

AT FIRST, THE SHAPES ARE **INDISTINCT,** SPLOTCHES OF GREY AGAINST THE DARKER GREY OF THE CLOUDS.

BUT, RAPIDLY, THEY **CLOSE** THE DISTANCE BETWEEN SKY AND SEA. THE MOON **LIMNS** THEIR RUGGED OUTLINES.

IT'S AN **AVALANCHE**--A VERITABLE **SHOWER** OF STONE--DEATH AND DESTRUCTION MEASURED BY THE **TON,** TUMBLING END OVER END OUT OF THE HEAVENS...

...INDISCRIMINATELY TWISTING, MANGLING, **CRUSHING** WHATEVER LIES BELOW.

CRRAASS

PANIC:

;GNNAGH;

THERE IS, OF COURSE, NOWHERE TO **RUN**...

CLOP

...AND YET, THE ONLY BODIES NOT DARTING ABOUT AIMLESSLY BELONG TO **HOWARD**, AND TO THE DEAD.

SHORTLY, THE STORM ABATES...

S.S. DAMNED

...LEAVING THE SHIP WOBBLING LIKE SOME FREE-FORM **SCULPTURE** CAST ADRIFT FROM THE **MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.**

C-CAPTAIN--THE BRIDGE IS A **SHAMBLES** --RADIO'S OUT--NAVIGATIONAL INSTRUMENTS GONE--

ENGINES SEEM **INTACT**, SIR--BUT WE'RE SAILING **BLIND**--

THE MEN ARE AWAITING YOUR **ORDERS**-- SIR?

T-TELL THEM ;GASP; I SAID-- TO TRY-- ANYTHING AND ;GASP; **EVERYTHING!**

I MEAN IT!!

SEND UP **FLARES**-- SWEEP THE WATER WITH **SEARCHLIGHTS**--

YELL FOR **SUBMARINER**--WHISTLE FOR **FLIPPER**--

PUT A MESSAGE IN A **BOTTLE**--!

I DON'T CARE **WHAT** IT TAKES-- GET US **HELP!!**

AND THE CREW OBEYS-- EVEN TO THE LETTER.

SPLASH

SHOOM

CALLING ALL DOLPHINS!

CALLING PRINCE NAMOR!

ZASH

FOO SU SH

AWROOOGAH

FLARES EXPLODE, BELLS CLANG, SIRENS BLEAT, BULLHORNS BELLOW....!

THE GENTLE WARMTH OF THE MEDITERRANEAN EVENING IS TRANSFORMED INTO A FOURTH OF JULY NIGHTMARE.

ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS **BOB DYLAN:** "EVERYBODY MUST GET STONED."

SOMEHOW, I ALWAYS **FIGURED** HE MEANT IT THIS WAY.

THAT'S FUNNY-- SO DID **I.**

WHO'S BOB DYWAN?

POOF

I DUNNO...I JUST HOPE WE'RE QUOTING **SURVIVORS,** NOT **MARTYRS.**

HOW TWUE! FWAME OF MIND IS **SO** IMPOR--

OH!! WOOK!!

WAND HO! WAND HO!!

LAND! A SIGH OF RELIEF RISES LIKE TRAPPED STEAM FROM THE EMBATTLED SHIP.

BONG

BONG

BONG

THERE'S ONLY ONE **PROBLEM:** THIS BELL-SHAPED ATOLL ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE!

AND, TOO... THERE'S THE MATTER OF THE **BONGING.**

BONG

AS THE SHIP DRAWS **CLOSER,** THE SOUND GROWS **LOUDER,** SPLITTING NOT ONLY **EARS...**

...BUT **ROCK,** AS WELL.

BRRRAACK

AW, **NO--** IT **IS** AN EGG!!

AND **FROM** IT HATCHES NOTHING LESS BIZARRE THAN --A **CONCRETE SWAN...**

EEEEYiii!

...RISING DESPITE ITS **WEIGHT,** DESPITE ITS UNFLAPPABLE WINGS, INTO THE SKY!

BEV!! LEGGO!!

WAAAGH

BEV-- **WHY?**

I-- I'M **SORRY,** DUCKY-- I **COULDN'T!**

IT HAPPENED TOO QUICKLY-- MY GRIP **FROZE--!**

YEAH, WELL-- WE'RE JUST LUCKY THIS AGGREGATE ABOMINATION HEADED FOR THE *ISLAND!*

IT *COULD'A* DUMPED US OVER THE OPEN *SE-* *EEEYOWP!*

HOWARD-- *LOOK* AT THIS PLACE! IT'S A *JUNGLE!*

SQUISH

BIG DEAL! SO'S *OHIO!*

LET'S GET TO *SHORE,* HUH? WE CAN TALK FLORA AND FAUNA *LATER!*

WHATEVER YOU SAY! AT LEAST THIS IS ONLY A *POND--!*

RIGHT--JUST A FEW *FEET* TO PADDLE--EVEN *I* OUGHTTA BE ABLE TO--

--EXCEPT, I CAN BARELY *MOVE.*

BEV?

I CAN'T MAKE ANY HEADWAY, *EITHER.*

I KNEW THAT LAND-ING WAS TOO *CUSHY* TO BE TRUE!

THIS IS *QUICKSAND,* ISN'T IT?

H-HOW SHOULD *I* KNOW?! I MEAN-- IT'S NOT LIKE THIS IS AN EVERYDAY *OCCURRENCE* WITH ME!!

HOW OFTEN DO YOU SUPPOSE A GIRL FACES THE TERRORS OF *NATURE,* GROW-ING UP IN *CLEVELAND??*

DUCKY-- TAKE MY HAND? PLEASE? I'M *SCARED!*

SUDDENLY, IT BEGINS **AGAIN**: THE DEAFENING PEAL OF THE **BELLS**:

BONG BONG

BUT THIS TIME, IT'S ACCOMPANIED BY ANOTHER **SOUND**...

...A **RUSTLING** IN THE UNDERBRUSH.

AS IF IN **ANSWER** TO THE BELLS' EERIE SUMMONS, A COTERIE OF BIZARRE BE-INGS CREEPS OUT FROM THE TANGLE.

NEEZ!

TH-THEY WANT TO **HELP** US!!

UHM...NO THANKS. I'LL **PASS.**

NEEZ?

HONEST-- NO **OFFENSE!** IT'S JUST...IF YOU GUYS ARE ANY INDICATION OF *WHAT'S* **COMIN'**--

--I'D PREFER TO BOW OUT **NOW.**

DON'T BE **FOOLISH**, BROTHER. TAKE MY HAND.

WAAUGH

Y-YOU'RE A

DUCK!!

I WAS... UNTIL THE DOCTOR GAVE ME NEEZ.

I KNOW I SHOULD BE REACTING MORE --WHAT? VISIBLY TO THIS MADNESS, BUT--

DON'T APOLOGIZE, TOOTS-- I'VE BEEN THERE.

BONG BONG

AFTER AWHILE, IT'S ALL YA CAN DO TO FAKE THE EXPECTED GASPS AN' MOANS OF--

SURPRISE!

OH JEEZ, NOW WHA--?

OH MY GOSH!!

WHY-- HOW CHARMINGLY INARTICULATE! THANK YOU, MS. SWITZLER.

AND MAY I WELCOME YOU TO THE ISLAND OF--

DR. BONG!

;waaaugh÷

UH... WHAT IF I SAID, "NO, YOU MAY NOT"?

NEXT THE ROCKY ROAD TO ANONYMITY!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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HOWARD THE DUCK™

SPECIAL ONCE IN A LIFETIME ALBUM ISSUE!

HOWARD AT THE MERCY OF HIS MOST POWERFUL FOE-- THE INCREDIBLE CREATOR!

DEADLINE DOOM!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

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WHY-- HOW CHARMINGLY INARTICULATE! THANK YOU, MS. SWITZLER.

;waaaugh;

UH...WHAT IF I SAID, "NO, YOU MAY NOT"?

THAT'S WHERE OUR STORY LEFT OFF LAST ISSUE. IT'S ALSO WHERE OUR STORY WILL RESUME-- NEXT ISSUE. THE ADMITTEDLY OFF THE WALL ADVENTURE INTO ABSURDITY WHICH YOU'RE ABOUT TO READ IN THIS ISSUE IS THE RESULT OF...TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES. PLEASE STAND BY.

"Relax," I keep telling myself. "Ease up. Calm down. Cool off. Untense. Hang loose, effendi/pilgrim/true believer. They will understand. Just explain it to them. Candidly, but with dignity. They'll agree—it's better than going reprint."

It is? A comic book without panels, balloons, or even a plot? An essay, for cryin' out loud?!

Uh-uh, Gerbs. This time you've done it for sure. This time you've gone too far. They'll be snickering about your self-indulgent disdain for commerciality from coast to coast. You're through in this business. The only reader who'll remain loyal after this flagrant flouting of comic book convention is Harlan Ellison. Maybe.

"On the other hand, Steve, you could let Duckdom Assembled decide for itself." That inner voice again, gently prodding. "After all, what's the dif? You've already made your decision. The die is cast. No turning back, right?"

Right. But how—?

"The truth, Steve. You tell them the truth, plain and unadorned.

"For the past eight weeks or so (mid-January to mid-April), you've been laboring under tremendous pressure. You've scripted HOWARD #15, the HTD ANNUAL, the first several weeks of continuity for the Duck's newspaper strip, and, almost singlehandedly, you've edited, written, and produced the 64-page KISS magazine. This last required your presence in the Bullpen almost daily, for at least a few hours, over that two-month span. Hours which should've been spent at your desk, writing.

"Consequently, you fell severely behind on your deadlines. You caused John Verpoorten, Marvel's production manager, no end of grief. And, incidentally, you shot your nerves completely to hell."

Sob stories are a dime a dozen, inner pal.

"Don't interrupt yourself, Steve. We're just getting to the kicker. While you were busily burning out your mind and body with all this writing and editing and stuff, you were also attempting to clear out your luxurious Hell's Kitchen abode and ship your motley possessions off into the sunset in advance of your impending move to Las Vegas."

Yes. It was heaven, those eight weeks.

"And you cracked under the strain. Come on. Admit it. To yourself first, and then the readers. You fell apart, that's all. For some very good reasons. So you were late sending out the synopsis for HTD #16 to Gene Colan, and it looked like this issue would have to go reprint until—"

—until Colombia, Missouri, midway on my drive to Vegas, when the idea for this special story or essay or true confession, or whatever it is, struck me like a bolt from the smog. Lots of big pictures. Lots of words. All about the relationship between a boy and his Duck. And comics in general. And living at the precipice, playing the Balance Game over the cosmic chasm filled with lime jello.

"Correct. Like an idiot, you voluntarily took on the pressure of producing this instant issue rather than allowing the magazine to go reprint. You did it for the readers."

Uh-huh. And you really think they'll understand?

"I don't know, Stevie-boy. But you've got fourteen pages left in which to convince 'em. If I were you, I'd get on it. Hustle! Go! Go! GO!!"

Swell.

ZEN AND THE ART OF COMIC BOOK WRITING

A COMMUNIQUE FROM COLORADO

STEVE GERBER, WRITER/EDITOR
CAST OF THOUSANDS, ARTISTS
IRV WATANABE, LETTERING
DOC MARTIN, COLORIST
ED HANNIGAN & NELSON YOMTOV, PRODUCTION

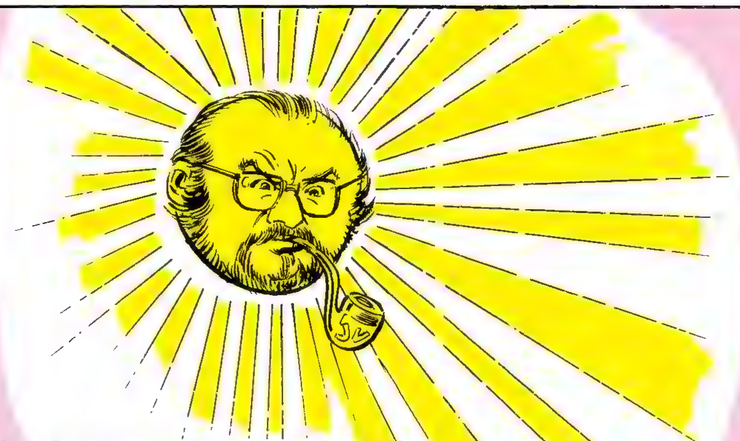
I. writers are like people

As mentioned, I am en route to Las Vegas. (To live, not to gamble. Assuming there's a difference.) I've just spent five days on the road, crossing New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas. Five days of refinery fumes, gently rolling boredom, old friends, fast food, Indian burial mounds, family, and flatlands—in that order.

Howard is travelling with me, as he does wherever I roam. He's there in my head. He won't go away. He is as much a highway marker as the green and white signs that weigh heavy on the shoulders of Interstate 70. He is, in a word, real.

We're in Colorado now, in historic Georgetown, a little hamlet about thirty-five minutes west of Denver housing perhaps 700 persons. Moving inexorably from the general to the even more specific, we're seated in a booth in a restaurant called the Happy Cooker, which specializes in Belgian waffles. Like the rest of historic Georgetown, the Cooker is clean, quiet, and quaint. Its large windows look out on the mountains to the south and admit vast quantities of sunshine into the dining area. The plants—in shelves on the windows, on hooks in the ceiling—soak up the rays and turn the precise shade of green to complement the golden brown Belgian waffles. It's a minor miracle of color co-ordination.

Plants are like people. Writers are like plants. Therefore, and this may come as a surprise, writers are like people. Give them light, water, nourishment, a comfortable pot, and an encouraging word, and they'll grow. Really. They'll blossom. They'll create things of beauty.



This principle applies to most varieties of human beings. If other people would accord them as much consideration as they do their plants, they, too, would bloom. Of course, plants don't talk back, which makes them much less annoying to have around the house. This may or may not explain why so many of our institutions seem to devote themselves to the task of turning people into vegetables rather than treating them with the same kindness we lavish upon the already mute. We tend to prefer stumps over trees. You can sit on a stump.

Some writers require more room than others to flourish. Some grow vertically, some laterally or radially, others in vast spaghetti-like tangles. Again, just like plants.

I'm of the spaghetti breed. I'm fascinated by the marinara-splotched pasta of existence, the unrelentingly absurd aspects of human relations and of storytelling. My plots are very thick and zesty.

One moment. Across the table, Howard looks up from his Waffle Surprise and groans. "You're rambling, Gerber. Get to the point, willya? Talk about me!"

"In a minute," I advise him. "I'm building toward an important principle here."

Unlike some of my colleagues, I do not plot my stories months and months in advance. In fact, the "next issue" blurb at the end of each story is always the most difficult line for me to write. I change my mind like some people change underwear. Ideas go stale for me as quickly as...well, you get the gist. I'm easily bored.

Characters who cannot change as rapidly, as often, as mercurially as I do anesthetize me. Characters can become institutions devoted to making vegetables out of writers.

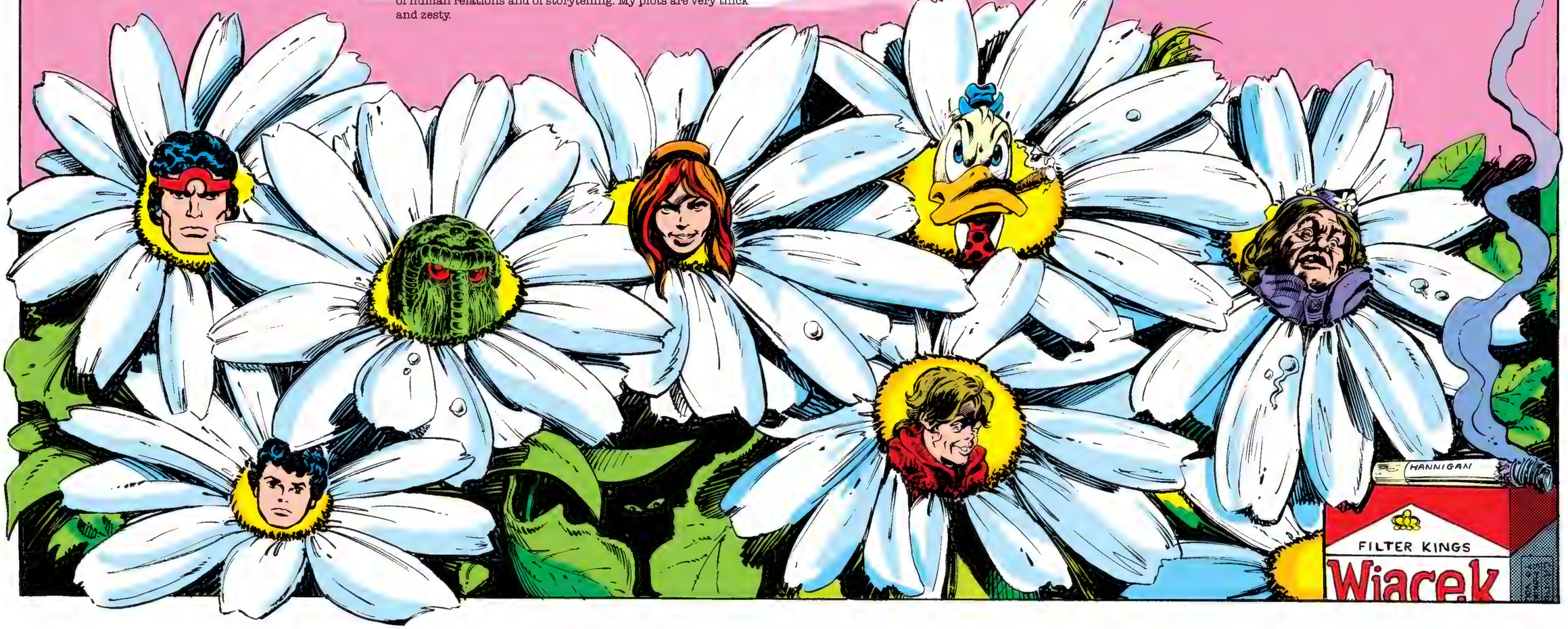
Howard looks up again, raises an eyebrow. "Not bad. You may continue."

Thank you, your honor.

I have found this fowl to be as plantlike as most writers. As complex, as unpredictable, as adaptable to new circumstances, and as totally screwed-up in the head.

I can relate to Howard the Duck because he will never become an institution.

"An' I can relate to you, too, pal. But only 'cause we've got the same taste in women."



"Somethin's eatin' at you, Gerber, an' it's not just deadlines or pressures or work, either. I've watched you hairless apes. When you whack out, it's for deeper reasons than that, stuff you can't talk about, or won't."

"Yes, I suppose that's true," I mumble.

"You 'suppose.' That's great. By the way, when did the Human Torch first appear in a solo adventure in the Marvel Age of Comics?"

"Huh? STRANGE TALES #101. Why?"

"And who were the villains in the first fifty issues of FANTASTIC FOUR—in order?"

"Uh…Mole Man, the Skrulls, the Miracle Man, Sub-Mariner, Dr. Doom, Subby and Doom together, Kurrgo, Puppet Master, Sub-Mariner again, Dr. Doom, Impossible Man, Hulk, Red Ghost, Subby again, The Mad Thinker, Dr. Doom, Dr. Doom—"

"Stop!!"

"Whew. Gladly. Thanks. What was the point of—"

"I just wanted ya to see for yourself how much trivia you were carryin' around in yer head! It's gotta be crowdin' out the important stuff, or keepin' it safely suppressed. I bet ya could rattle off a complete list of yer next fifty deadlines, too. But when I ask you about yer psychological posture, you 'suppose'!"

"Now wait just a moment, my web-footed wag! As far as you're concerned, that's not 'trivia', it's history. Where do you figure you'd be today without the first fifty issues of FF? Moreover, that kind of question doesn't require subjective evaluation, just a good memory. When you start asking for opinions about the nature of the mind—!"

"Your mind, Gerber. Not the mind."

"Howard, you're chasing your tail feathers in this conversation. What are you trying to say?"

"I told ya! Somethin's eatin' you, an' ya won't talk about it. You keep retreatin' to the abstract—to suppositions about intangibles like boredom an' institutions an' society. There was a reason you wanted ta write this dumb essay—an' yet you refuse ta let me or the readers in on it!"

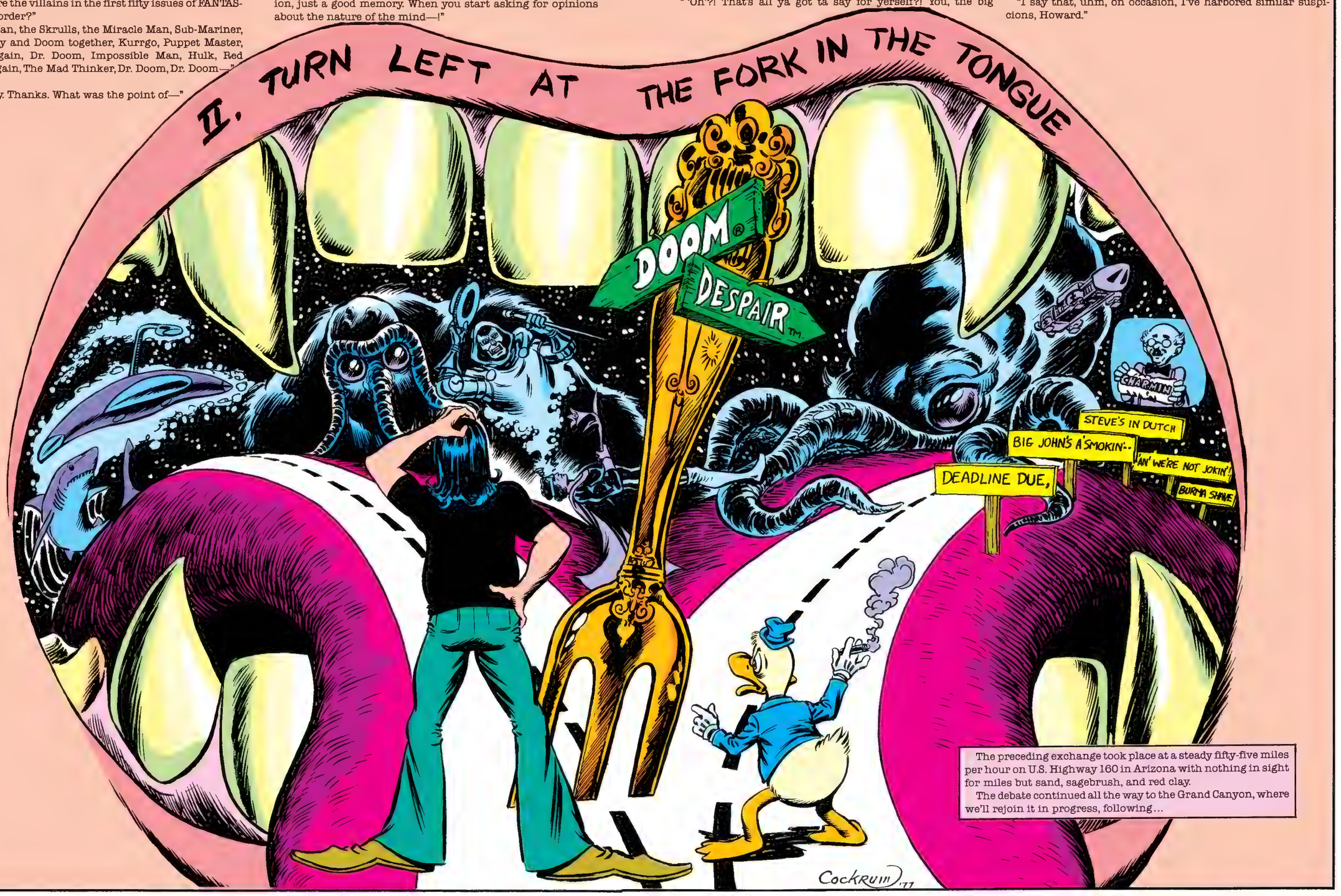
"Oh."

" 'Oh'?! That's all ya got ta say for yerself?! You, the big humanist, the creative writer, the fragile flower of literature? That's the best ya can do, genius! No wonder my dialogue's been so banal lately!"

"Howard—"

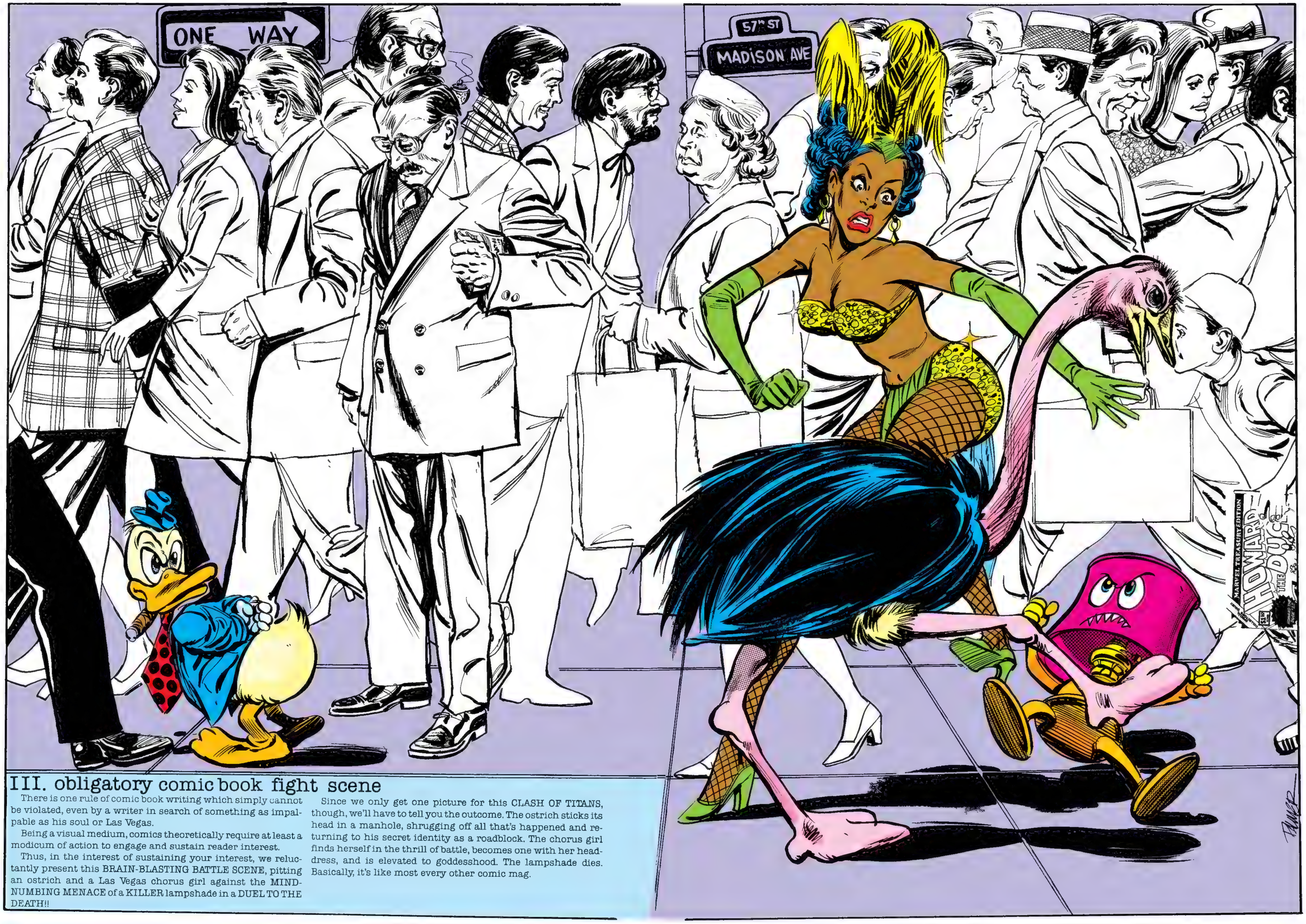
"Y'know what, Gerbs? Deep down, I've always suspected you don't know as much as yer stories would infer. You've learned how ta manipulate words an' pictures ta give a semblance of profundity, but it's all superficial! Cosmetic surgery performed on creaky old ideas an' thoughts! Wnaddaya say ta that?!"

"I say that, uhm, on occasion, I've harbored similar suspicions, Howard."



The preceding exchange took place at a steady fifty-five miles per hour on U.S. Highway 160 in Arizona with nothing in sight for miles but sand, sagebrush, and red clay.

The debate continued all the way to the Grand Canyon, where we'll rejoin it in progress, following…



III. obligatory comic book fight scene

There is one rule of comic book writing which simply cannot be violated, even by a writer in search of something as impalpable as his soul or Las Vegas.

Being a visual medium, comics theoretically require at least a modicum of action to engage and sustain reader interest.

Thus, in the interest of sustaining your interest, we reluctantly present this BRAIN-BLASTING BATTLE SCENE, pitting an ostrich and a Las Vegas chorus girl against the MIND-NUMBING MENACE of a KILLER lampshade in a DUEL TO THE DEATH!!

Since we only get one picture for this CLASH OF TITANS, though, we'll have to tell you the outcome. The ostrich sticks its head in a manhole, shrugging off all that's happened and returning to his secret identity as a roadblock. The chorus girl finds herself in the thrill of battle, becomes one with her headdress, and is elevated to goddesshood. The lampshade dies. Basically, it's like most every other comic mag.

iv. ...and visions of sugar plums

"Majestic, ain't it?" Howard asks, obviously unimpressed.

"Yes," I reply, trying my best to sound contemplative, and failing.

"The Colorado River took eons to carve this steep, sinuous monster objet d'art outta some flat, bland plateau—almost as long as you're takin' gettin' to the point o' this story."

"Howard, it seems vaguely blasphemous to engage in petty banter about human problems in the face of this—this—"

"Hole?"

"I don't believe you said that."

"Look, Gerber, it's not like nature dug this oversized storm drain with the specific intent o' creatin' a tourist attraction! It exists because the river did what it was supposed to do—it flowed. And the rocks did what they were supposed to do—they eroded. Guys like you are just envious 'cause nature didn't haveta put any thought into its work. You wanna be able ta write the same way—only writing isn't a natural process. Nature only hadda make somethin' outta nothin' once in its whole career. You've gotta do it daily. If God had had your temperament, the universe would still be a box o' typewriter paper, waitin' ta be opened!"

I stare dumbly at my friend the Duck, pleading with my eyes for him to continue. He turns away, shaking his head, folding his arms over his chest in disgust. He won't talk to me, and I don't know what to say. After some deliberation, I arrive at the following gem: "Communication ... takes ... a lot of energy, Howard."

He scowls.

I light a cigarette.

We both sit there for a long moment, wordlessly, gazing at the spectacle of the canyon.

"Y'know what that canyon really is, Gerber? It's the world's biggest, most convoluted rut!"

I laugh involuntarily. "I've gotta hand it to you, pal. That's definitely a new interpretation of the phenomenon."

"An' that tight-lipped smile tryin' ta elbow its way onta yer face is the first sign of spontaneity I've seen from you in eleven pages! Loosen up, willya! Save the theorizin' for the speech-communication majors o' the world! You're outta school now, big boy. You're pushin' thirty with a bulldozer. There's no how-to manual on one-to-one interaction between allegedly intelligent beings. The way ta communicate is just—do it!"

"Be myself, you mean. Yeah. Mmm-hmm. That's terrific advice, Howard. Thank you. Wowee. Why didn't I think of that?"

"It ain't that simple, turkey. Ya gotta be yerself without tryin'. Like the river down there."

"Or the eroding rocks, for that matter, huh?"

"Yeah, well, yer not gettin' any younger. But ya got the choice, rocks or river. I figger you've been stonewallin' it too long already." He stands, brushes the dust off his feathers and coat, and turns to walk away. "Listen, I'm gonna grab a bite ta eat. They got a great processed ham sandwich in that restaurant next to the souvenir gift shop with the Taiwan-manufactured Indian beads. Why don't you sit here alone a bit an' meditate on the natural splendor while I gorge myself on preservatives? Free associate. See what ya come up with. Tell the folks at home a story. An' whatever ya do, plan on bein' more interesting next time we meet!"

VI tell the people a story

Ramsludge Hawthorne looked at the assortment of official forms fanned out across the modest expanse of the coffee table. All of the forms began with the same three words: "Please Print Clearly." All of the forms asked for the same information: name, address, city, state, zip, age, married, single, separated, divorced, annual income, father's name, father's address, mother's maiden name, mother's maiden address, health: good, fair, poor, do you certify that you have answered all questions on this form completely and truthfully to the best of your knowledge?, signature, date. The tax forms in the assortment even asked for spare change. Panhandling by mail, Ramsludge thought. Gimme, gimme, gimme. Your money, your word, your life, your every waking moment. And remember, your record will follow you wherever you roam, biting at your heels like a rabid dog. We own you, lock, stock, and zip code.

"You only own me as long as I continue to exist," Ramsludge snarled at the forms, which responded with the same old questions.

Ramsludge's wife the former Remarka Demonstrata, heard her husband's comment as she entered the living room with her knitting basket. Remarka would almost have been beautiful had she been born a dwarf elm; as a woman, however, she was an aesthetic disaster, short and spindly with a full head of leaves. She plopped herself in the easy chair across the coffee table from the sofa where Ramsludge was still hunched forward, foaming at the forms. "Gonna off yourself, hubby-dubby?" she queried enthusiastically. "Your insurance all paid up, IhopeIhopeIhope?"

"Darling," Ramsludge hissed, "your mind is as barren as your scalp is fecund."

"Yes," Remarka sighed, folding her hands in her lap, turning her gaze heavenward. "That's why we have such a full and happy life together, Rrrrrramsludge!" He hated it when she growled his name.

"Actually," Ramsludge said, "I was thinking of deserting you, going into hiding, adopting a new name and perhaps a puppy from Bide-a-Wee, establishing a new identity for myself, something less…oppressive."

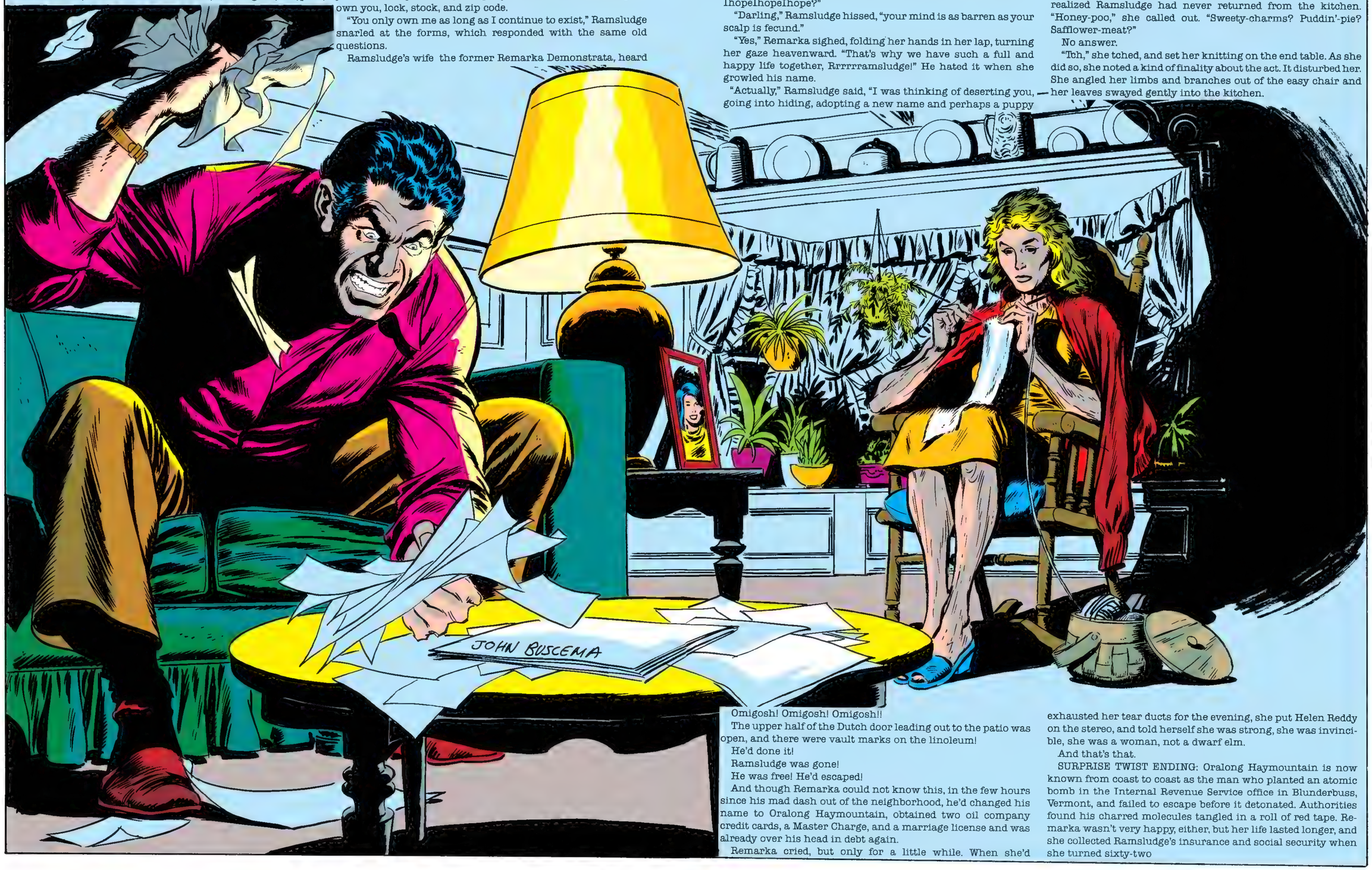
"Aw, g'wan!"

"Okay, I will." And with that, Ramsludge leaped from the sofa, over the coffee table, and bounded into the kitchen. Remarka sighed, smiled stupidly, and undertook to knit a little blue booty. "Tee hee," she giggled at the needles.

It was some hours and one completed booty later that she realized Ramsludge had never returned from the kitchen. "Honey-poo," she called out. "Sweety-charms? Puddin'-pie? Safflower-meat?"

No answer.

"Tch," she tched, and set her knitting on the end table. As she did so, she noted a kind of finality about the act. It disturbed her. She angled her limbs and branches out of the easy chair and her leaves swayed gently into the kitchen.



Omigosh! Omigosh! Omigosh!!

The upper half of the Dutch door leading out to the patio was open, and there were vault marks on the linoleum!

He'd done it!

Ramsludge was gone!

He was free! He'd escaped!

And though Remarka could not know this, in the few hours since his mad dash out of the neighborhood, he'd changed his name to Oralong Haymountain, obtained two oil company credit cards, a Master Charge, and a marriage license and was already over his head in debt again.

Remarka cried, but only for a little while. When she'd exhausted her tear ducts for the evening, she put Helen Reddy on the stereo, and told herself she was strong, she was invincible, she was a woman, not a dwarf elm.

And that's that.

SURPRISE TWIST ENDING: Oralong Haymountain is now known from coast to coast as the man who planted an atomic bomb in the Internal Revenue Service office in Blunderbuss, Vermont, and failed to escape before it detonated. Authorities found his charred molecules tangled in a roll of red tape. Remarka wasn't very happy, either, but her life lasted longer, and she collected Ramsludge's insurance and social security when she turned sixty-two

"Okay, class, now let's analyze the preceding story," says the professor. "I think we can all agree that its literary merit is nil, and thus our approach must be from a psychological viewpoint. Any objections?"

The class shakes its head.

"Good. Then let us proceed. We have here the product of an extremely hostile individual with readily apparent paranoid tendencies. But he is more fearful than angry, more humiliated than vengeful. He can only conceive of escape from a given unpleasant situation. Coping behavior, like communication, requires too great an expenditure of energy. Now, how can we deduce these facts?

"First, ecce icky homo! Behold the icky man! His name perfectly encapsulates his character. 'Ramsludge,' he is called. The strong, masculine—but significantly sheepish—first syllable, coupled with the concept of slime, waste, and unpleasant odors. The writer feels that the male in this society is like a sheep who is allowed to live only so long as he can be shorn. Then he's slaughtered for chops. Obviously, the author also feels both compassion and propinquity with and to his beleaguered protagonist. Do we agree, class?"

The class nods.

"The last name, too, is symbolic, being that of an early American literary figure, now hopelessly outdated, and also that of a tree, which, again surely not coincidentally, is how both author and protagonist view the female. Got that?

"Plodding odiously onward, we find Ramsludge engaged in a conversation with income tax forms, loan forms, insurance forms, etc. We can, I think, infer from this pathetic presentation of the male the author's own attitude toward bureaucracy. There is clearly antipathy extant 'twixt the writer and officialdom. Doo-wah!

"The woman is a stereotypic pre-liberationist caricature, toward whom the author also harbors hostilities. He compares her with a tree, or more accurately a shrub, which takes root and vegetates in one place. Yet she mockingly growls his name, as if to say, 'haha hoho and heehee, I dare you to come and transplant me, tiger.' So, like her analog the tree, her unquestionably superior strength lies in her relatively immovable nature. Obviously, she perceives the hawthorne as crowding out the dwarf elm, eating up all the nutrients in the soil, and she wants the larger, hungrier tree to die. The hawthorne, of course, concedes. The home is her turf. He runs away. Any questions, class?"

The class raises its hand, and the professor nods in its direction.

"Are your suggesting, sir, that the author's theme might be the irreconcilable differences between the sexes?" inquires the class.

"I'm suggesting that this clown doesn't believe two hairless apes can inhabit the same clucking planet if one of 'em happens ta be him!

"See, once he makes his big, dramatic exit, class, he proceeds to embroil himself in the same stupid woes he suffered during his marriage to Remarka. Ultimately, he even blasts himself ta kingdom come! The guy's worse than a born loser—he's a rat who only knows how ta run one maze. He stands in terror of his life pattern, but that's all he does—stands! An' that's where his tree-ness comes inta the picture!"

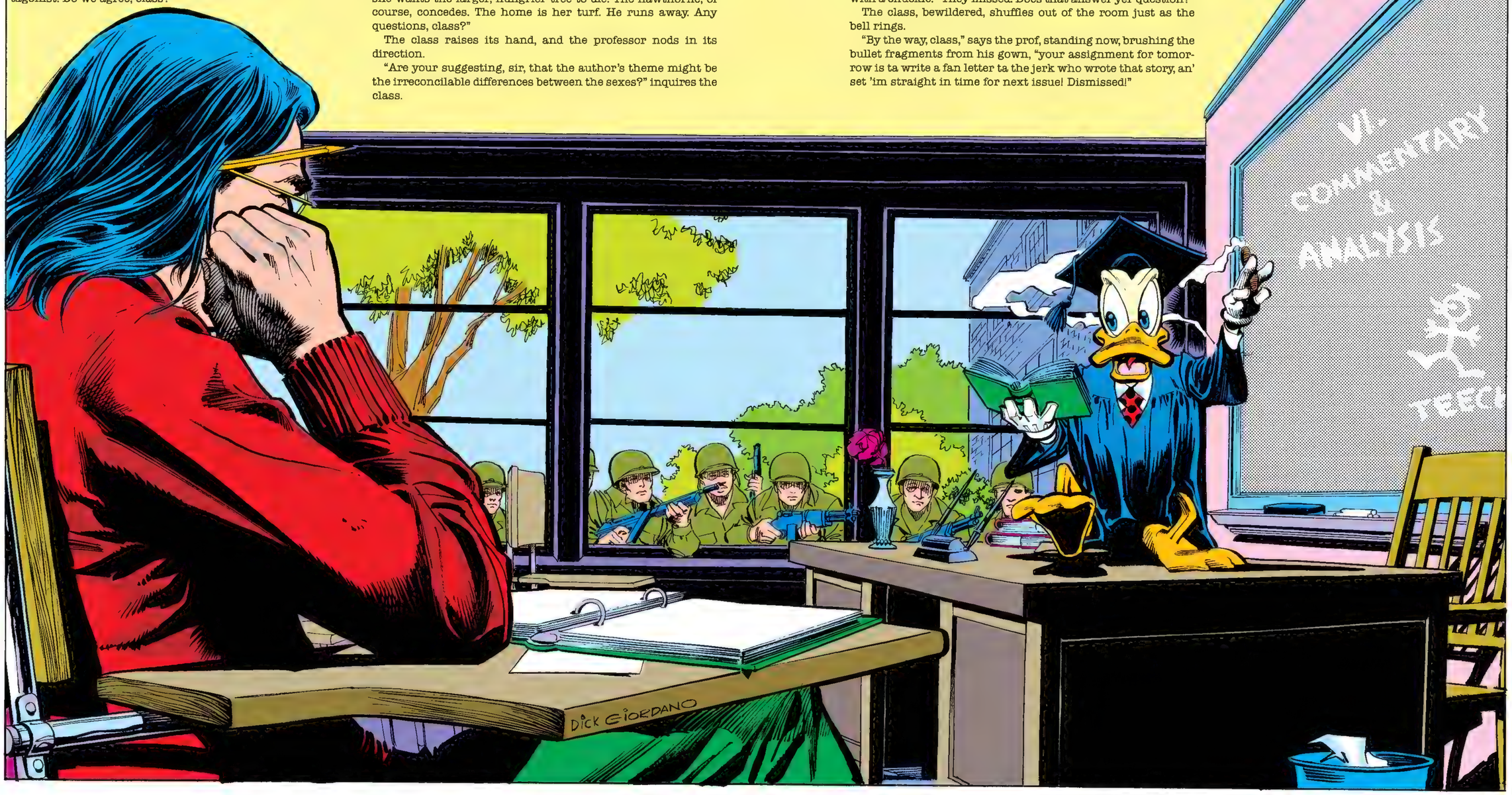
"Are you saying, Professor Howard, that one can emancipate him or herself from these constricting, stationary positions?"

A shot rings out. The professor lurches backward, hands rising instinctively to his chest. He falls forward onto the classroom floor. The class, horrified, springs from its seat to the professor's side.

The professor looks into the face of his class, winks, and says with a chuckle: "They missed. Does that answer yer question?"

The class, bewildered, shuffles out of the room just as the bell rings.

"By the way, class," says the prof, standing now, brushing the bullet fragments from his gown, "your assignment for tomorrow is ta write a fan letter ta the jerk who wrote that story, an' set 'im straight in time for next issue! Dismissed!"



FLUKE!

MORE OUTRAGED MARVELITES

OUTRAGED MARVELITES

MARKET-PLACE

TYPIST

GERBER STRAINED BRAINS

"THIS'LL TEACH YOU TO FEED *US* PABLUM!"

NASSER / austin

FOR: HOWARD THE DUCK

VII. FAN LETTER

Dear Steve,

Just finished reading HTD #16, and I'm afraid my reaction to your noble experiment is somewhat ambivalent. I admire your daring, your dedication, and your determination to innovate. But frankly, I don't care much for your writing. If Edison's experiments had worked out as badly as this one, I'd be penning this letter by gaslight.

Still, since I am a HOWARD THE DUCK fan, and since I realize that you'd never be insane enough to attempt this sad sort of charade again, let me enumerate some of the high points of the ish.

Above all, I enjoyed the personal touch in what I assume to be the prologue to the "story." For a change, it's welcome to learn the real circumstances, the particulars behind the euphemism "Dreaded Deadline Doom." We tend to forget that writers like yourself, Marv Wolfman, Len Wein, Doug Moench, Bill Mantlo, Chris Claremont, and the rest of the crew are human beings with finite reserves of stamina. If the other writers push themselves as hard as you do, and I know they do, my admiration for the consistent high quality of Marvel's product is trebled.

I also like Howard's evaluation of the Grand Canyon. It's hard to tell whether he was speaking sarcastically or not (his comment about processed food tends to make think he was), but his estimation of it as the "world's biggest rut" certainly startled me into rethinking my attitudes on the relationship between man and nature.

What I did not like was your self-conscious self-effacement throughout the story. Okay, so maybe you'll never grow up to be another Tom Robbins or Thomas Pynchon. Maybe you are doomed to labor as a "reactionary" writer, in the sense that your material may always consist more of invective than inventiveness. But that's no reason to see yourself as a tree that can't take root! Come on, Gerber! Get with it! How can you wallow in self-pity when HTD is premiering on the nation's newspaper pages this month, and you've finally ejected yourself from the madness of New York and found a warm, dry climate where a professional cactus has just got to grow more prickly than ever?

Back to the high points of the story. I loved the "obligatory fight scene." You've gone a long way toward removing HOWARD from the punch-hit-kill syndrome, but this was the most blatant statement of your position to date. Congratulations. And when is the Las Vegas chorus girl going to get her own book?

Well, I guess that's about it for this time. Wish I could've been more laudatory, but I guess the old maxim holds true: a fill-in issue is a fill-in issue is a fill-in issue. Too bad. Anyway, I'm still looking forward to the continuation of the Dr. Bong saga next ish. I understand it's dynamite.

So, 'til Howard moults, MAKE MINE MARVEL!

Steve Gerber
Las Vegas, NV 89122

PAR AVION

NEXT ISH: *THE MAN FROM BEVERLY'S PAST! THE POWER OF THE PRESS! THE LADY DUCK WITH THE SILVER TRAY! AND MUCH, MUCH MORE AS WE REJOIN HOWARD AND BEVERLY ON THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF DR. BONG. MEANTIME, JUST PRETEND THIS ISSUE NEVER HAPPENED. YOU HAD A BAD DREAM, THAT'S ALL, AND EVERYTHING'LL BE OKAY IN A SCANT THIRTY DAYS! SEE YOU THEN.* ≥*Waaaugh!*≤

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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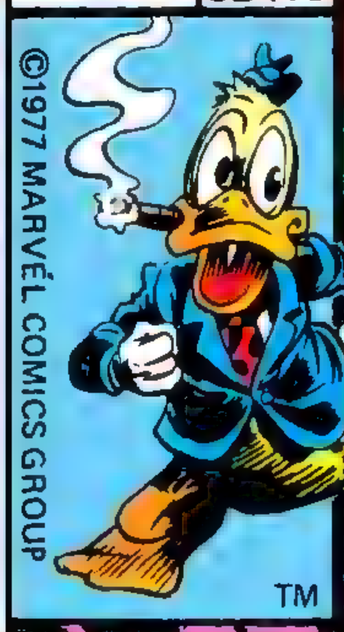

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

SWASHBUCKLING ACTION IN THE MIGHTY MARVEL MANNER!

FEATHERS VERSUS FANGS FROM HELL!

PLUS THE ORIGIN OF DR. BONG!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR | GENE COLAN ARTIST | KLAUS JANSON INKER | A. KAWECKI LETTERS | JANICE COHEN COLORIST

I'VE SPARED NEITHER *EFFORT* NOR *EXPENSE*, MS. SWITZLER--

--TO TRANSPORT YOU AND THE *FOWL* TO MY *ISLAND*.

YOU'RE TO BE *GUESTS* IN THIS, MY PRIVATE PARADISE.

AND SOON, PERHAPS, *PARTNERS* IN--

UH...*NAH!* THANKS FOR THE *INVITE*, DOC, BUT WE'VE *BOTH* GOTTA RUN--

--FAST.

ALSO *FAR*.

"WUXTRA! WUXTRA! THE REAL, TRUE SUPER-SENSATIONAL INSIDE SCOOP ON THE WANTON, SHAMELESS PAST OF DOCTOR BONG!"

BEGGING YOUR *PARDON,* DUCK--

--BUT THAT IS *NOT* ONE OF YOUR OPTIONS.

HALT!!

HALT, I SAY!!

BONG

HWNGG

"THIS ISLE IS *MY* DOMAIN, FOWL!

"MY WHIM IS *CANON,* MY AUTHORITY INEXPUGNABLE! NONE DARES CHALLENGE MY TINTINNABULATORY POWERS--

"FOR I CAN *KILL* AS EASILY AS *PARALYZE* --MERELY BY ADJUSTING THE *PITCH!*

I'VE SPARED YOU THIS TIME, HOWARD, BECAUSE IT SUITS MY *PURPOSE* TO DO SO.

BUT KNOW THAT YOUR *NEXT* SUCH AFFRONT WILL COST YOU YOUR *LIFE!*

COME, BEVERLY.

YES, LASSIE--BRING OUR "WOODEN" FRIEND ALONG.

NEEZ?!

COME AND BEHOLD THE *FORTRESS* OF DR. BONG --AND HIS *BRIDE!*

TAKE HIM TO THE *NORTH TOWER*, LASSIE. SEE THAT *FIFI* ATTENDS TO HIS NEEDS.

YOU, MS. SWITZLER, SHALL ACCOMPANY ME TO--

WHAT'S THE *TROUBLE*, MY DEAR? YOU SEEM *...MESMERIZED.*

S-STONE... IT'S ALL *STONE...!*

WHAT DID YOU *EXPECT*-- ALUMINUM SIDING?

N-NO, BUT...!

I MEAN, *JEEZ*... MOST PEOPLE CAN'T EVEN AFFORD A *MOBILE HOME* ANYMORE!

TH--THIS PLACE COULD HOUSE AN *ARMY*--OR EVEN A CREDIT RATING BUREAU!

WH--WHAT DO YOU *DO* WITH ALL THIS STUFF-- THE COMPUTER BANKS--THE MACHINERY--?

PRIMARILY, I INTIMIDATE SUPERFICIAL INTELLECTS LIKE YOUR *OWN.*

YOU SEE, MY DEAR--ALL OF THIS HARDWARE IS *ORNAMENTATION*--UTTERLY NON-FUNCTIONAL!

THE TAPES WHIRR, THE GEARS GRIND, THE LIGHTS FLASH, AND THAT'S *ALL!* BUT IT *LOOKS* IMPRESSIVE!

IMAGE, MS. SWITZLER! IMAGE IS EVERYTHING!

WHAT APPEARS TO BE IS FAR MORE PERSUASIVE THAN WHAT IS--IF WHAT IS CANNOT READILY BE ASSIMILATED!

WHA'--?

IMAGE, WOMAN!! THE DOMINANCE OF STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE, FORM OVER CONTENT!

I'VE JUST DEFINED MYSELF FOR YOU!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

UH... UH-UH.

YOU WILL! AND YOU'LL BE GRATEFUL FOR THE LESSONS I SHALL TEACH YOU.

Y-YEAH?

YEAH! JUST AS I AM INDEBTED TO YOU--

--FOR THE TRUTHS YOU IMPARTED TO ME ONE DAY LONG AGO--

...IN ANOTHER LAND, ANOTHER LIFETIME!

I--?

ALL IN GOOD TIME, MY DEAR. FIRST--

GAZE UPON THE NERVE CENTER OF THIS MAMMOTH COMPLEX--!

OOOH!

"HERE IS THE TRUE SEAT OF POWER, BEVERLY! NOT A THRONE--

"BUT A HUMBLE BRIDGE CHAIR, STATIONED BEFORE THE MOST POTENT WEAPON EVER DEVISED BY MAN!"

IN HIS NORTH TOWER CHAMBER, HOWARD LIES **RIGID,** HOVERING BETWEEN SLEEP AND WAKEFULNESS, HALF-DREAMING OF **SEA SERPENTS** IN TOP HATS...**BOULDERS** TUMBLING OUT OF THE SKY...STONE **EGGS** THAT HATCH CONCRETE **SWANS**...

...AND **OTHER** REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST 24 HOURS.

OH, YES. IT ALL **HAPPENED.** THAT'S HOW HE AND BEV WERE PLUCKED FROM THE DECK OF THE **S.S. DAMNED**...*

*IN **HTD** #15. --STEVE.

...AND **AIRLIFTED** TO THIS COMBINATION FORTRESS, WRITER'S WORKSHOP, AND HOLIDAY INN.

AND NOW HE--**WAIT!**

W--W--

VITAL SIGNS!

--wa--}waaaugh{

SLOWLY, HIS BODY TINGLING CROWN TO TAIL LIKE A SINGLE LIMB "FALLEN ASLEEP", HE **RISES** FROM THE BED, TAKES HIS BEARINGS...!

LAMPS...BED... TABLE...CHAIRS... NOTHIN' **SINISTER** ...OR EVEN **INTERESTING!**

BUT I BETCHA THE **DOOR**...

...YUP.

LOCKED TIGHT.

}sigh{

NO TELEPHONE... NO **TV**...BUT AT LEAST BONG PROVIDED SOME ***READING*** MATTER.

VERY THOUGHTFUL.

GIDEON BIBLE

WONDER IF HIS TASTE RUNS TO ***NOVELS,*** OR--

Hmmm... NO ***TITLE.*** PROB'LY HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

HOWEVER...

HUH...?

THAT'S BEV'S HAND-WRITING!

IT'S SOME KINDA DIARY...!

For Beverly's eyes only

Journal: 1968

CLICK CREEEEEK

AN' OBVIOUSLY, BONG WANTS ME TA READ--UH-OH!

SOME-BODY COMIN'!

BONJOUR, MONSIEUR 'OWARD!

I AM MME. FIFI.

YEAH, WELL, I'M--

:awwwp:

"FLABBERGASTED" IS THE WORD.

AND NOT WITHOUT REASON:

LE DOCTEUR BONG TELLS ME YOU HAD A CULINARY TRAUMA ABOARD SHIP, MONSIEUR.

ZE THOUGHT-LESS PEEGS SERVED YOU DUCK À L'ORANGE, NON?

YOU LOST YOUR LUNCH, OUI?

YOU MUST BE TRÉS FAMISHED, MONSIEUR!

COME-- MANGEZ-VOUS!

ZAT MEANS "EAT," MON-SIEUR!

LES BEANS ET LES FRANCS, MONSIEUR!

:slurp:

YOU WEEL DEEG EEN, OUI?

AND EEF YOU CLEAN YOUR PLATE, MONSIEUR--

FIFI WEEL GIVE YOU ZE RE-WARD!

BON APPETIT!

MEANWHILE, ABOARD THE S.S. DAMNED, ANCHORED OFF BONG'S MEDITERRANEAN ISLE...

...STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING.

THE BOULDERS PILED LIKE PIZZA TOPPINGS ON ITS DECK, THE STONES THAT RAINED FROM THE SKY...

...HAVE BEGUN TO EVAPORATE!

MOREOVER, THE DAMAGE DONE TO METAL--AND FLESH --BY THEIR THUNDEROUS IMPACT--

--IS REPAIRING ITSELF!

AS IF BY MAGIC, THE HOBBLED WALK, THE PULVERIZED TALK...!

WINDA...?

MY BWUISE! IT'S HEAWING, PAUL!

S-SO IS--MY-- DEATH!

WH--WHAT??

DON'T LOOK SO DISAPPOINTED, MONA.

FORTUNATELY, MONA, CHARLES, AND THEIR FALTERING RELATIONSHIP DO NOT CONCERN US. PAUL SAME AND WINDA WESTER, HOWEVER...!

CAPTAIN! IT WAS ALL AN /WWUSION!! I IMPWORE YOU-- WET'S TWY TO WESCUE HOWARD AND BEVEW'Y!

THEY'RE OUR FRIENDS, CAPTAIN--AND YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

WE COULD SEND A SMALL PARTY ASHORE TO--

I WOULD STRONGLY ADVISE AGAINST THAT, CAPTAIN!

DON'T WISTEN! CWOSE YOUR EARS, CAPTAIN!

B-BUT...!

WHAT THE--?

OBOY.

I DECIMATED YOUR SHIP *ONCE*, CAPTAIN, AND I CAN DO IT *AGAIN!*

BUT NEXT TIME, I SHAN'T BE SO *MAGNANIMOUS* AS TO *UNDO* THE CHAOS I'VE WROUGHT!

I *WARN* YOU! SET SAIL AT ONCE--

BUNG

--OR YOU WON'T *BELIEVE* THE PROFLIGATE NASTIES I WILL HEAP ON YOUR HEADS!!

CIAO, BABY!

WHY, YOU--YOU-- *MEGAWOMANIAC!!*

THUS, AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS HE APPEARED--

--THE CAMPANOLOGICAL FIEND DEPARTS--

--LEAVING THE "DAMNED" REVERBERATING WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS MONITION!

RRRRUMMBLEE

HE'S *BWUFFING*, CAPTAIN! MEWE *IWWUSIONS*, I TELL YOU! WE *MUST* TAKE THE WISK!

I BESEECH YOU!! CAPTAIN-- *PWEEEASE!!*

ahem MISS WESTER, SURELY YOU--I--THAT IS--

MISS WESTER, WHAT I'M TRYING TO *SAY* IS--

YES--?!

--NO.

EEEEEEEK

WINDA! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER! WE'LL SAVE THEM!

WE'LL GRAB A BOAT OUR-SELVES AND ROW OUT TO THAT--THAT--

"THE ISLAND! WINDA, IT'S-- LOOK!!"

"I CAN'T! I CAN'T! IF IT AFFECTS YOU, IT MUST BE HOWWIBLE!"

"B-BUT, WINDA, IT'S-- IT'S--!"

"IT'S WHAT?? DESCWIBE IT-- GENTWY, PAUL!"

"GENTLY? UH, WELL...I GUESS IT'S NOTHING, THEN."

INACCURATE. BONG'S REDOUBT STILL EXISTS... SOMEWHERE.

FOR AT THIS MOMENT, WITHIN ITS WALLS...!

THE FIRST TRUE TEST OF MY POWER, LASSIE--

--AND I'VE NOT MERELY EMERGED VICTOR-IOUS--!

I'VE ACHIEVED ONE OF MY LIFE'S GREAT AMBI-TIONS, GIRL!

MOST MEN LIVE AND DIE WITH-OUT EVER--

NEEZ!

DINNER AND SWITZLER ARE SERVED, DR. BONG...

...JUST THE WAY YOU LIKE THEM!

THANK YOU, CARLO.

AND MY COMPLIMENTS TO THE COUTOURIER.

THE LADY BLENDS ELEGANTLY INTO MY AESTHETIC...

...AS I ALWAYS *IMAGINED* SHE WOULD.

YOU DID, HUH?

UH, DOC... DO I *KNOW* YOU?

NO, MS. SWITZLER, YOU DO NOT.

OH, WE'VE *MET*...

...BUT YOU NEVER TOOK THE *TIME* TO *KNOW* ME.

I--DON'T UNDER-STAND...!

OBVIOUSLY. NOR DID YOU NINE YEARS AGO...

...WHEN MY *OBSESSION* WITH YOU WAS *INCI-PIENT*, SATIABLE.

BUT I'M GETTING *AHEAD* OF MY-SELF.

"AND THE INCHOATE DR. BONG WAS NOT A **COLLEGIAN**, BUT A ROLY-POLY GLOB OF **CHILD**, TAUNTED AND DESPISED BY HIS PEERS.

PULL UP YER *PANTS*, LESTER!

TUCK IN YOUR *SHIRT*, LESTER!

YOUR *BELLY-BUTTON'S* HANGIN' OUT!

:sob:

WHAT *IS* IT, LESTER DEAR?

TELL MAMA WHAT'S *WRONG!*

THEY MADE *FUN* OF ME-- THEY CALLED ME *NAMES!*

THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH OF *MONKEY-MOUTHS!*

"'WHY, LESTER,' MOM-MY SAID, 'THAT'S **VERY** ORIGINAL. I BET IT'S A FUNNIER NAME THAN **THEY** CALLED **YOU**.

"'YOU KNOW, **I** WANTED TO BE A **WRITER** WHEN I WAS GROWING UP,' SHE CONFIDED.

"'IF I'D HAD **YOUR** TALENT FOR MAKING UP NAMES, MAYBE I **WOULD'VE** BEEN. THE PEN IS **MIGHTIER** THAN THE SWORD, YOU KNOW.'

R-REALLY?

"IT WAS THE MAJOR TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE.

"I RACED UPSTAIRS, SEIZED MY WEAPON...

"...AND EMBARKED UPON A CAREER...

MARKY... IS... A...POO-POO BRAIN...!

"...AS AN ASSASSIN!

"IN THIRD GRADE, OUR CLASS TOOK A FIELD TRIP TO THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER. I HEARD MY CALLING IN THE ROAR OF THE PRESSES!

"AFTER ALL, IF A LOWLY PEN WAS MIGHTIER THAN A SWORD, THIS WAS A LITERARY H-BOMB!"

YOU NEEDN'T RANSACK YOUR MEMORY, MY DEAR. YOU NEVER ENCOUNTERED LITTLE LESTER.

WE MET SOME YEARS LATER...

OH?

"...AT COLLEGE, WHERE YOU WERE STUDYING THEATRE, AND I, OF COURSE, MAJORED IN JOURNALISM.

"YOUTH GANG TERRORIZES CITY--MAYOR'S FAMILY SLAUGHTERED!" INDEED!

IS THIS TRULY YOUR CONCEPT OF A POLITICAL STORY, MR. VERDE?

WELL, YOUNG MAN--??

WELL, WHAT-- SIR?

DEFEND THIS SENSATIONALIST GARBAGE, MR. VERDE-- IF YOU'RE ABLE!

IT'S NOT LIBELOUS, IS IT?

NO, BUT-- THEN I CAN WRITE WHATEVER I WANT!

SYNTAX IS MIGHTIER THAN YOUR ETHICS, SIR!

"SADLY, HE MISSED THE IMPLIED THREAT, SO I WAS COMPELLED TO DEMONSTRATE THE TRUTH OF MY POSITION...

-BIRD OF PREY JOURNALISM PROF ACCUSED IN DRUG SCANDAL

"...WITH A CAREFULLY-PHRASED ARTICLE IN THE CAMPUS PAPER."

I--I REMEMBER NOW! PROFESSOR FURGEN! HE LOST HIS **TENURE**-- HIS WIFE **DIVORCED** HIM--!

THAT HORRIBLE SCANDAL **DESTROYED** HIS WHOLE **LIFE!**

CORRECT. AND THE **IRONY** OF IT IS... HE **WASN'T** GUILTY.

WHAT??

NOT OF ANY **SERIOUS** OFFENSE, AT ANY RATE.

HE'D MERELY OBTAINED A FEW **CAPSULES** OF SOMETHING OR OTHER FROM A GRADUATE ASSISTANT...

...TO KEEP HIMSELF **AWAKE** WHILE HE COMPLETED A **VERY** IMPORTANT MONOGRAPH.

IT **WAS** ILLEGAL ...BUT IT WAS ALSO THE **FIRST** TIME HE'D USED ANYTHING STRONGER THAN **NO-DOZ!**

AND **STILL** YOU WROTE THAT ARTICLE? THAT'S REPREHENSI--

SIT DOWN, MS. SWITZLER!

:ulp:

CRRASH

S-SORRY... **RUDE** OF ME... I THOUGHT YOU WERE FINISHED...!

THAT WAS ONLY THE **BEGINNING!** WHILE THOSE WOULD-BE WOODWARDS AND BERNSTEINS AT SCHOOL SAT **YAMMERING** ABOUT ETHICS...

...**I** WAS DEVELOPING SOURCES! **INFORMANTS!**

LEARNING WHOM TO GET **DRUNK,** WHOM TO **PAY,** WHOM TO **FLATTER...**

...TO GET THE **INFORMATION** I NEEDED! FURGEN'S DISGRACE WAS A MERE **EXERCISE!**

I COULD'VE TOPPLED THE **DEAN,** THE **CHANCELLOR,** AND HALF THE STUDENT BODY IF I'D **WANTED** TO!

BUT IMPROPITIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES AROSE, BEVERLY. I-- I FELL--IN **LOVE.**

I, UH, DON'T SUPPOSE IT WAS A SCHOOLBOY **CRUSH** ON JULIE CHRISTIE, HUH?

HARDLY.

"I'D **NEVER** MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF OVER A WOMAN BEFORE. INDEED, I'D RARELY EVEN **SPOKEN** TO ONE --OTHER THAN MOMMY.

"TO AID IN HONING MY **VISUAL** PERSPICACITY I ENROLLED IN A **LIFE-DRAWING** COURSE MY SENIOR YEAR. ON FOUR SEPARATE OCCASIONS, **YOU** WERE OUR **MODEL**, MS. SWITZLER.

"AND ON THOSE OCCASIONS, MY EYE-TO-HAND COORDINATION WAS CONSISTENTLY, **MARKEDLY** DIMINISHED.

"BUT YOU SEEMED ...DIFFERENT, SO I **LINGERED** AFTER CLASS, INTERCEPTED YOU ON THE **STAIRS**.

"AND WITH **CONSUMMATE** GENTLEMANLINESS...

"I POLITELY SUGGESTED WE--**DATE**.

"YOU **REBUFFED** ME, BEVERLY, FLUNG YOURSELF AWAY...

"...AND INTO THE WAITING ARMS OF SOME PATHETICALLY STRAIGHT-ARROW **FRAT** TYPE."

TH-THAT WAS **DAVID!** HIS PARENTS YANKED HIM OUT OF **SCHOOL** A WEEK LATER--

--FOR DATING A **NON-JEWISH GIRL**.

YES. I **KNOW**.

Y-YOU TOLD THEM?!?

B-BUT DAVID AND I WERE IN **LOVE!** MY GOD, HE **DIED** IN A CAR CRASH, DRIVING BACK TO SCHOOL THROUGH A **BLIZZARD** JUST TO **VISIT** ME!

Y-YOU **KILLED** HIM!!

TOMMYROT! I MERELY REPORTED THE **FACTS**--

"--LIBERALLY SPICED WITH **INTERPRETIVE** MATERIAL, OF COURSE, AND SOME NIFTY **JUXTAPOSITIONS** OF UNDISTORTED TRUTH.

"IT WAS MORE **PERSUASIVE**, FOR EXAMPLE, TO DISCUSS YOUR **MODELLING** DIRECTLY FOLLOWING THE FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF DAVID'S PURCHASING A NEW **WATERBED**.

INVESTIGATOR SMUT EXTRA

WOMAN EATS CHILD FOR SNACK WITH COFFEE

By Verde

SUPERMARKET ENQUIRER

SENATOR MAKES LEWD GESTURE AT PREXY By Verde

"OVER THE YEARS, I **REFINED** THAT TECHNIQUE--AND MY **BYLINE** APPEARED IN SOME OF THE NATION'S MOST WIDELY-READ PERIODICALS. I WAS THE QUINTESSENTIAL '**PROVOCATIVE**' JOURNALIST! SECRETLY, I HOPED **YOU'D** NOTICE. BUT YOU DIDN'T.

"IN TIME, I CONCLUDED I WAS AIMING AT THE WRONG **MARKET** TO REACH YOU.

BACK BITER IS ANN-MARGRET ROGE MOORE WITH A WIG ON?

By VERDE

"SO I SIGNED ON WITH A MAJOR MIDWESTERN PAPER--AS A **ROCK CRITIC!**

YOU'RE WRITING TO **MIDDLE AMERICA** NOW, VERDE-- REMEMBER THAT!

"I'D WANTED TO BE A **CULTURE STAR** LIKE JANN WENNER!

EDITOR

THEY DON'T CARE **SPIT** ABOUT MUSIC--

--THEY JUST WANNA KNOW IF THE LYRICS ARE **DIRTY!**

"THEY WANTED TO TURN ME INTO **J. JONAH JAMESON!**

"I STORMED OUT--A DARING **PLAN** ALREADY FORMING...IN MY MIND!

"STARDOM BY **ASSOCIATION!**

"I ARRANGED TO GO ON TOUR--AND PERFORM WITH--MILDRED HOROWITZ AND HIS BAND, THE MOST POPULAR, MOST OUTRAGEOUS ROCK GROUP OF THE EARLY 1970's.

BONNGG

BONNG

"I WAS TO WRITE ABOUT THE GROUP--ABOUT THE GLITTER, THE DECADENCE, THE AMORALITY, THE TEENAGE HYSTERIA THEY ENGENDERED.

"AND SINCE I ALREADY HAD A PAPERBACK DEAL LINED UP, I HAPPILY BECAME PART OF IT ALL! I COULD RATIONALIZE MY SEDUCTION LATER, IN PRINT.

HI, KIDS!!

I'M THE EASTER BUNNY, AND I--

KILL!

SMASH

"THAT WAS MY PART IN THE SHOW --THE SYMBOL OF INNOCENCE WHICH MILDRED AND HIS BAND OBLITERATED,

"NOT A VERY DEMANDING ROLE...

"...UNTIL ONE NIGHT THE FRACAS GOT TOO WILD, AND I STUMBLED INTO MILDRED'S GUILLOTINE.

"MY LEFT BUNNY MITTEN SNAGGED, SO WHEN THE BLADE RATTLED AND DROPPED.."

CUT!

SO ACCORDIN' TA *YOU*, BONG'S A *HUMANITARIAN*. SO CLUCKING *WHAT*-- FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, I MEAN?

AM I NOT A *WOMAN*?

HAVE I NOT *NEEZ*?

AND *YOU* WILL BE QUITE UN *HOMME*, MONSIEUR--

--ONCE LE DOCTEUR *EVOLVES* YOU.

OH! WERE YOU NOT *ADVISED*? YOU ARE EARMARKED FOR-- *RECONSTRUCTION*.

SO ZAT YOU AND I CAN-- PRODUCE *OFF-SPRING*.

WAAAUGH

UH-UH-- NO-- NIX-- NEIN--NYET --*FORGET IT!!*

THIS DUCK IS *NOBODY'S* LABORATORY ANIMAL!

MONSIEUR-- COME *BACK*! DO YOU NOT *LIKE* ME?!

LOVE YA, FIF--*LOVE* YA.

BUT DON'T WAIT *UP*, HEAR?

SO NOW YOU'VE HEARD *HALF* THE PAINFUL HISTORY OF *DR. BONG*.

THE REST...I AM PLEDGED TO DIVULGE *ONLY* TO MY *MATE!*

MY SECRETS--MY FORTRESS--MY POWER--MY FLOCK-- *SHARE* THEM WITH ME, BEVERLY!

WH- *WHAT?!* MARRY *YOU??*

JEEZ-- MARRY ANY- BODY??

SUDDENLY--

CRASH

I FIGGERED SOMETHIN' SLEAZY WAS GOIN' ON WHEN FIFI TOLD ME--

AWP!

NEEZ!

NEEZ!

NEEZ!

GET A GRIP ON YER GLANDS, DING-DONG! HANDS OFF!!

EH--?!

YOU SEE--THEY LEAP TO MY DE-FENSE AT EVEN THE MOST MINISCULE SIGN OF DANGER.

GIVE ME YOUR HAND, BEVERLY-- OR I'LL HAND YOU HOWARD'S HEAD.

NO!! I MEAN YES!! I--

BONNG

ENOUGH! DESIST!!

TAKE HIM TO THE EVOLVO-CHAM-BER!

HE IS NOT TO BE HARMED!

WH-WHAT'S AN...EVOLVO-CHAMBER?!

OH, WHAT'VE I DONE--TO HOWARD--AND MYSELF??

NOTHING YOU'LL RE-GRET, MY DARLING. TRUST ME.

THE PEN IS MIGHTIER, TOO, THAN THE HEART.

NEXT

THE TERRIBLE METAMORPHOSIS!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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HOWARD UNDERGOES THE MOST *DISGUSTING* TRANSFORMATION OF *ALL!*

THIS DUCK.. THIS MONSTER.. THEM CHANGES!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER — WRITER/EDITOR • GENE COLAN — ARTIST • KLAUS JANSON — INKER • IRV WATANABE — LETTERER • JAN COHEN — COLORIST

METAMORPHOSIS

THE EVOLVO-CHAMBER OF CASTLE BONG:

TASTEFULLY APPOINTED IN A STEEL AND PLASTIC **BELL** MOTIF, THIS SPACIOUS HALL WITH ITS DISTINCTIVE FLAVOR OF CREEPING **MENACE** WILL, MOMENTARILY, SPELL THE **END** OF HOWARD...THE **DUCK!**

NO, **NO,** MY DEAR BEVERLY... I PROMISED HE WOULD NOT **PERISH.**

BUT **NO PAUCITY** OF THINGS WILL **HAPPEN** TO HIM!

B-BUT YOU SAID NOTHING WOULD **HAPPEN** TO HIM...

...IF I AGREED TO **MARRY** YOU!

I INTEND TO ELECTRONICALLY **REPROGRAM** HIS GENETIC STRUCTURE...

...TO **RECONSTRUCT** THIS FOWL AS THOUGH HE'D BEEN BORN ANOTHER SPECIES!

Y-YOU DON'T MEAN--

YOU'RE **NOT** GOING TO TRANSFORM HIM INTO ONE OF THESE--

--THESE **CREATURES?!**

NEEZ?!

NEEZ!

÷GRRRR÷

UH... I MEAN, DON'T GET ME **WRONG**... THEY'RE **LOVELY!**

AND THEY HAVE **GREAT** PERSONALITIES...!

NEEZ!

NOW, NOW... HAVE NO FEAR, MY SWEET.

I'M CERTAIN YOU'LL **APPROVE** OF THE CHANGES ONCE YOU'VE SEEN THEM.

BUT FOR NOW...WE'VE OUR **NUPTIALS** TO ARRANGE.

NO!!

I'VE PROMISED--LIKE AN IDIOT-- TO MARRY YOU, BUT I **WON'T** LET YOU REPROCESS MY DUCKY'S **ANATOMY!**

YOU **DARE?!**

YOU ARE THE **BETHROTHED** OF DR. BONG!

I **ORDER** YOU TO RETURN TO MY **SIDE!**

OH, JEEZ... IS **THIS** GONNA BE A RELATIONSHIP TO REMEMBER...!!

I'M KINDA PUT OFF BY THE **MILI-TARISTIC** APPROACH, DOC.

BEVERLY!

I'M NOT AN **APPENDAGE** ...OR A **RIB.**

I DON'T **HAVE-TA** PROTRUDE FROM YOUR **SIDE** IF I DON'T WANNA!

*HER FINGERS DART ABOUT THE CONTROL CONSOLE--FLIPPING THIS **SWITCH,** PRESSING THAT **BUTTON,** TWISTING YON **DOODAD**.. MAKING A **MESS** OF BONG'S PRECISION SETTINGS.*

CLICK

ZZZZZZ

*BUT THE MACHINERY CONTINUES TO **HUM**... HOWARD'S CAPSULE CONTINUES TO **FILL**...*

*...WHILE BONG'S LAB ASSISTANTS GROW EVER MORE **RESTIVE!***

NEEZ!

NEEZ!

NEEZ!

*IT'S ALL TO NO AVAIL. THE WEIRD SOLUTION SLOSHES UP OVER THE DUCK'S **BILL,** AND BEVERLY SWITZLER AT LAST CONCEDES...*

I-- **BLEW** IT! I'VE ONLY SPED UP THE PROCESS!

H-HOWARD... I **FAILED** YOU!!

:SOB: THE ONLY TIME YOU EVER REALLY **NEEDED** ME :SOB: AND I LET YOU **DOWN!**

BACK TO YOUR **STATIONS!** ALL OF YOU!

NEEZ?

THE FEMALE'S **EMOTIONS** ARE SOLELY THE PROVINCE OF **DR. BONG!**

ZZZZZZZZ

GLOP

GURGLE

YOUR DUTY IS TO SERVE ME--AND **SALVAGE** THE EXPERIMENT!

I DO **NOT** WANT THIS DUCK **DEEP-FRIED!**

A SENTIMENT WHICH BEV WOULD HEARTILY **ENDORSE...!**

BUT, AT THE MOMENT, HER MIND IS OCCUPIED ENTIRELY WITH **ESCAPE.**

CRREEEEEEEK

*SHE'LL **FLING** OPEN THE OAKEN DOOR, RACE ACROSS BONG'S MYSTERIOUS **ISLAND,** HURL HERSELF INTO THE **SEA,** AND SWIM...*

...NAH, FORGET IT.

*FOR THE THICK FORESTS, THE AZURE MEDITERRANEAN SKIES, THE SALTY SEA BREEZES HAVE BEEN...**REPLACED.***

*...FROM WHICH ESCAPE IS, WELL, **HIGHLY UNLIKELY.***

*BONG'S REDOUBT NOW REPOSES ATOP A JAGGED PEAK IN THE **HIMALAYAS...***

BUT DON'T WORRY, FOLKS: THE SITUATION IN THE EVOLVO-CHAMBER IS **EQUALLY** HOPELESS!

POP

SMOKE BILLOWS FROM THE CONTROL CONSOLES! SPARKS **SPEW** FROM THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM! HOWARD'S CAPSULE **GURGLES** LIKE AN OFF-BRAND **BLENDER!**

EVACUATE, MY PETS! TO THE GREAT HALL! FOLLOW **ME!!**

THE EXPERIMENT IS **TERMINATED!**

NON, MONSIEUR LE DOCTEUR! YOU PROMISED ME LE **CANARD** AS-- MY **MATE!**

WE MUST **SAVE** HIM!

IT'S TOO **LATE,** FIFI! **COME!** I COMMAND YOU!

NON!!

FOOEY! EEF YOU WEEL NOT **HELP** ME RESCUE MON CHER AMOUR--

FIFI WEEL DO IT **MYSELF!!**

ZUT ALORS!!

SMASH

AH, **POOR** MONSIEUR 'OWARD!

C'EST **BON!** POUR EENTO FIFI'S ARMS! FIFI WEEL CARE FOR YOU!

BLAM!

SO SAYING, THE COURAGEOUS YOUNG FRENCH MAID, HERSELF EVOLVED FROM AN ORDINARY **EARTH-DUCK**, RACES FROM THE EVOLVO-CHAMBER WITH HOWARD CLUTCHED TO HER... APRON.

AND JUST IN **TIME.**

YOU SEE, MON CHER-- WE HAVE **OUTRUN** ZE 'OLOCAUST! REST EASY!

THAT'S RIGHT, MY PETS-- DOUSE THE FLAMES!

THOROUGHLY! LET'S HAVE **NO** SMOULDER-ING CORPSES!

MONSIEUR LE DOCTEUR DID NOT **SEE** US! WE ARE **SAFE** NOW, 'OWARD!

SAFE AND SOUND-- EEN **FIFI'S** PRIVATE QUARTERS!

OUI? 'OWARD? YOU CAN **HEAR** ME, MON AMOUR?

WHA'--?

B-BEV--?

Y-YOU ARE VERY **WEAK,** MONSIEUR. YOU MUST LIE STILL...!

FIFI... WILL **RETURN.**

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE-- IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE-- IT DOESN'T--

HOW COULD HE RELOCATE THE WHOLE *FORTRESS*--

--WITHOUT OUR EVEN FEELING IT *MOVE?!* HOW--?

BEVERLY... MY DARLING?

OH, *GAWD*--!

YOU *ABORTED* MY EXPERIMENT. YOU MUST NEVER, NEVER MEDDLE WITH MY WORK THAT WAY *AGAIN*.

YOUR WIFELY ROLE IS TO BE *SUPPORTIVE*, NOT DISRUPTIVE.

YOU MUST CULTIVATE A SENSE OF *TRUST*, AND BLIND, BLIND, SLAVISH *OBEISANCE* TO--

Y-YEAH, YEAH-- OKAY-- JUST-- *EASE UP* ON THE TRAPEZIUS THERE, WILL YA--

--HONEY? SWEET-HEART?

OF *COURSE*.

NOW LET US *TARRY* NO LONGER.

T-TARRYING? IS *THAT* WHAT THEY CALL THIS?

BONG

OUR *MARRIAGE*, BEVERLY MY LOVE.

IT IS *TIME*!

MONSIEUR 'OWARD, FIFI IS **BACK!**

I HAVE BREWED US SOME **TEA,** MONSIEUR, TO **RELAX** YOU, AND--

MON DIEU!!

MONSIEUR, YOU--YOU--!

WH-WHAT **IS** IT-- WHAT'D I **DO--?!**

EET EES NOT WHAT YOU **DO--**

--BUT WHAT YOU **ARE,** MONSIEUR!

HAH--?

"ZE **MIRROR,** MONSIEUR-- LOOK FOR **YOURSELF!"**

CRASH

WAAAUGH

N-NO-- NO!!

NOT THIS-- **NOT THIS!!** I-- I'VE JOINED THE **ENEMY!!** I'VE BECOME--A **HAIRLESS APE!!**

TH-THIS IS *HORRIBLE*-- WHAT'M I GONNA--?

I'VE NEVER PASSED FOR NORMAL *ANY-WHERE* BEFORE--

--LET ALONE ON *THIS* COCKEYED WORLD!!

AH, *OUI*, MONSIEUR-- EET EES A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY!

BUT *FIFI* WEEL HELP, MON CHER--JUST TELL ME WHAT TO DO--*ANY-THING!*--AND I WEEL--

CLOTHES! I GOTTA LATCH ON-TA SOME DUDS THAT *FIT*-- SUIT, TIE, HAT--BASIC BLUE, NOTHIN' *FLASHY*-- Y' KNOW?

AN' A *CIGAR!* I *GOTTA* GET A CIGAR!

CAN YA *SWING* IT, FIF?

SOME THREADS AN' A *STOGIE?*

SEE, I ALWAYS *THINK* BETTER WITH A CIGAR! I--

SAY NO *MORE*, MON CHER!

I WEEL TRY TO--HOW YOU SAY?-- *LATCH* ZESE THINGS.

PLEASE BE *PATIENT*, MONSIEUR... AND *CALM*, OUI? FIFI WEEL DO MY BEST.

YEAH-- RIGHT-- *SWELL--!*

MEANTIME, I'LL JUST PARK HERE AN' *WALLOW* --IN MY BRAND NEW *IDENTITY CRISIS!*

;waaaugh;

WHILE, **188 MILES** OFF THE COAST OF **MAINE**...

〈"COMRADE CAPTAIN--!"〉*

*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN. --STEVE.

〈"COAST GUARD CUTTER, CAPTAIN-- COMING UP FAST **ASTERN!**"〉

〈"THE JIG IS **UP**, CAPTAIN!"〉

〈"RAISE THE **NETS!** TODAY'S CATCH ISN'T WORTH A BOARDING, ANYWAY!"〉

〈"NEVERTHELESS, YOU'VE VIOLATED THE 200-MILE **LIMIT**, CAPTAIN--AND YOU STAND TO LOSE YOUR **SHIP!**"〉

BUNNGGG

〈"MOTHER OF TROTSKY!!"〉

〈"HOWEVER, THIS EMBARRASSING INCIDENT **COULD** BE **AVERTED**-- IF YOU WILL CO-OPERATE."〉

〈"**MARRY US**-- BY YOUR AUTHORITY AS CAPTAIN OF THIS VESSEL..."〉

〈"...AND I SHALL **REORDER REALITY** THUS THAT THIS IMBROGLIO NEED NOT **OCCUR**."〉

〈"CAPTAIN...?"〉

〈"DA-- **DA!!** REORDER!!"〉

〈"AS YOU WISH."〉

BONNGG

FROM THE DECK OF THE SOVIET TRAWLER COMES A DEAFENING **PEAL**, AND WHEN ITS **SONIC WAVES** REACH THE **CUTTER**...!

ANCHORS... AWAY.

〈"IT IS--*MIRACULOUS*, COMRADE CAPTAIN!"〉

〈"I ADVISE YOU TO KEEP *YOUR* END OF THE BARGAIN, CAPTAIN, LEST YOUR TRAWLER *JOIN* THE AMERICAN SHIP--"〉

〈"--ATOP *MOUNT ARARAT.*"〉

〈"*DA*-- OF COURSE!"〉

〈"*THIS* WAY, TOVARICH-- TO MY CABIN! AND BRING YOUR BLUSHING *BRIDE!*"〉

THUS, BONG AND BEV EXCHANGE *VOWS*, WHILE BACK AT THE *FORTRESS...!*

IN ZE *WARDROBE* DEPARTMENT, MONSIEUR.

LE DOCTEUR ENJOYS *COSTUMING* HIS MORE... *ADVANCED* CREATIONS.

YEAH, YEAH-- I *FIGURED* HE HAD A *PATERNAL* BENT. HE--

NAH, *SKIP* IT. ANY IDEA WHERE HE'S KEEPING *BEV?*

OUI, MONSIEUR-- CLOSE TO HIS *HEART.*

ZEY HAVE DEPARTED ON THEIR *'ONEYMOON.*

WHA'--?!

OUI, MON CHER.

SHE CONSENTED TO *WED* ZE MASTER --TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.

;waaagh; THIS CAN'T BE *HAPPENING*-- IT'S ANOTHER NIGHTMARE--!

TH-THAT'S *IT!* A RELAPSE--MY MIND'S ON THE *FRITZ* AGAIN!

PULL YERSELF *TOGETHER!* IT'S NOT THE END O' THE WORLD!

JUST 'CAUSE YA *LOOK* HUMAN, YA DON'T HAVETA *ACT* LIKE ONE!

BUNK, BEEF-BRAIN!

NOW *WAITAMINIT,* SHORTY-- DON'T PREACH TA *ME!* IF I WANNA INDULGE IN A LITTLE HEALTHY DESPAIR--

MONSIEUR...AT WHOM ARE YOU *SHOUTING?*

OH, DEAR...!

PERHAPS...*MONSIEUR!* ATTENTION, S'IL VOUS PLÂIT!

REGARDEZ-- LE BEEG, FAT *STOGIE!*

WHA'--?

FIF, I THINK YA JUST RESCUED MY SANITY! *MERCI,* SWEETHEART!

BUT CAN YA DO *LIKEWISE* FOR MY *BOD?*

I BEG YOUR--*AH!* ESCAPE, YOU MEAN! MAIS OUI!

AHEM! ON ONE CONDITION: WE BLOW ZIS JOINT *TOGETHER,* EH?

OH, HOWARD *TRIES* TO DISSUADE HER: "IT'S AN APE-EAT-APE WORLD OUT THERE, BABE. IT'S NO *PLACE* FER A SENSITIVE, INTELLIGENT *DUCK.*

"LISTEN TA THE VOICE OF *EXPERIENCE,* KID. *THIS* IS YER WORLD! *STAY--!"*

TO WHICH FIFI REPLIES, *"FOOEY!",* AND REMINDS HIM THAT *HE* HAS NOT BEEN TRAINED TO PILOT A *FLYING BONGER.*

SO IT'S A **TWOSOME** WHICH, SOME HOURS LATER, SWOOPS DOWN FROM THE STRATOSPHERE INTO THE SMOG-CHOKED SKIES OF--

NEW YORK!!

WE **MADE** IT, FRENCHIE! WE'RE FREE AS A SECOND CUP O' COFFEE!!

MONSIEUR-- ON ZE **RADAR**-- A **BLEEP!**

WE ARE BEING-- **PURSUIT!** BY A **JET PLANE,** I THINK!

THEY PROB'LY PEGGED US FER A **UFO!**

DON'T PANIC--WE'LL RAISE 'EM ON **RADIO**-- LET 'EM KNOW WE'RE **FRIENDLY--!**

"BUT, 'OWARD," SAYS FIFI, "ZAT EES **IMPOSSIBLE!** ZE SCRAMBLER EES **LOCKED IN** ON ALL FREQUENCIES!

"ZE SHIP CAN COMMUNICATE **ONLY** WITH CASTLE BONG!"

"waaaugh," SAYS HOWARD.

"BLUENOSE-ONE TO BASE," SAYS THE FIGHTER PILOT. "CRAFT DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE REQUEST TO **IDENTIFY.** IT'S DESCENDING ON THE **CITY--!"**

9177

US AIR FORCE FTH-177

WHOOOSSH

"BASE TO BLUENOSE-ONE...YOU HAVE YOUR **ORDERS.**"

AND THAT'S **THAT.** HOWARD AND FIFI'S FLIGHT IS BROUGHT TO AN ABRUPT, **EXPLOSIVE** CONCLUSION.

FOR A MOMENT, THE FLYING BONGER PITCHES AND SHIVERS LIKE A FOUR-TON LEAF IN THE **WIND.** THEN...

BLAMBLAM

...IT MEETS **CENTRAL PARK** IN A HEAD-ON COLLISION, SENDING BITS OF HOT **METAL,** CLODS OF **SOD,** AND TERRIFIED **PICNIC-KERS** SCATTERING IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

RRRAAASHHH CRRAAA-S

THE FIREMEN, COPS AND CURIOSITY SEEKERS AR-RIVE ALMOST **IMMEDIATELY...**

...AND AMID THE CONFUSION, ONE FIGURE CRAWLS AWAY FROM THE WRECKAGE, VIRTUALLY **UNNOTICED.**

NUMBLY, THE LITTLE MAN WATCHES FROM SECLUSION AS THE **FLAMES** ARE EXTINGUISHED AND THE FIRE-FIGHTERS DISCOVER--

--A **BODY!** THE THING WAS **MANNED!**

C'MON...GET IT **OUTTA** THERE! **HEAVE!!**

CHEEZ-- WHAT PLANET YA FIGGER **THAT** CAME FROM?

JERSEY, I BETCHA.

CHECK OUT THE **THREADS.** I THINK SHE WANTED TO PASS FOR **HUMAN!**

HUMAN?!

I MEAN-- WHO'D WANNA BE A **DUCK?!**

RIGHT, PAL-- YOU GOT IT! SHE **ABHORRED** BEIN' HATCHED A DUCK!

NAME ME **FIVE** HAIRLESS APES WHO'D RATHER BE **FOWL!**

HUMAN IS WONDERFUL, NEATO, AN' **KEEN**--NOT MENTION **SPIFFY-DOO!**

HOORAY FOR **HUMANITY!** DOWN WITH **DUCKS!!**

WHAT'S WITH **HIM?**

I SAW HIM CRAWL AWAY FROM THE **CRASH**... MUST'A JUST MISSED HIM BY **INCHES.**

POOR GUY'S PROBABLY STILL IN A STATE OF **SHOCK.**

:TCH:

YEAH...!

HUMAN! BETTER SHE SHOULD TRY TA PASS HERSELF OFF AS A **BEEF JERKY!!**

AT LEAST SHE'D BE ACCEPTED ON 'ER OWN **TERMS!**

:PSST: **CONTAIN** YOURSELF, HOTSHOT! PULL UP A BENCH! LET'S **CONFER!**

YEAH, YEAH-- **OKAY--!**

SHORTLY, A DISCREET DISTANCE FROM THE **CROWD**...

LISTEN, CHUM, IT'S A **SHAME** ABOUT THE CHICK, BUT YA GOTTA GET ON THE STICK AN' **SURVIVE!**

YA GOTTA MAKE IT IN NEW YORK 'TIL PAUL AND WINDA'S **SHIP** DOCKS.*

YA GOTTA FIND A WAY TA MAKE THIS ROTTEN TURN OF EVENTS WORK TA YER **ADVANTAGE!**

AT THE VERY **LEAST**, IT'S GOTTA IMPROVE YER RELATIONSHIP WITH **SWITZLER!**

BEV'S **MARRIED...!**

* THE **S.S. DAMNED**, FROM WHICH DR. BONG ABDUCTED HOWARD & BEV IN ISH #15. --S.G.

SO WERE **SONNY AN' CHER!** NUTHIN'S IMMUTABLE! MAY-BE NOT EVEN YER... **CONDITION.**

LOOK, WHAT **ARE** YA--A MAN OR A DUCK??

NEITHER.

NO, **BOTH.**

I'M A **MUCK.**

WHAT YOU **ARE** IS **STU--**

HEY! JUST BUG OFF, WILLYA, MOTOR-MOUTH?

I'M NOT BUY'N ANY **PEP TALKS** TODAY.

G'WAN-- **BEAT** IT-- YA **BOTHER** ME!

OKAY! I ADMIT IT! YER **TERMINAL!** THROW IN THE TOWEL!

BE A CHUMP! **BE** HUMAN!

I DON'T **CARE** ANYMORE!

PFFFFFT

HAPPY TRAILS-- **BIMBO!!**

YEAH?! WELL, GO SUCK A **MOOSE HOOF,** WISE GUY--!

LEMME ALONE-- TA WEEP IN *PEACE!*

I'VE EXHAUSTED MY REPERTOIRE OF *COPING* BEHAVIORS, PAL. I--

WAAAUGH

WHACK

MOVE ALONG, FELLA-- NO SNOOZING *ALLOWED* ON PARK BENCHES.

CRYIN' SHAME... THE CROP GETS *YOUNGER* EVERY YEAR...!

YA REALLY MAKE A PATHETIC *PICTURE,* YA KNOW THAT?!

SOME *DUCK!* YER NOT WORTHY O' THE *FEATHERS!*

AAAH-- *SHUDDUP!*

INTO THE SUNSET HE WADDLES, UNSTEADY ON NEWLY ELONGATED *LEGS,* HIS SPIRIT *SAGGING* 'NEATH THE BURDEN OF HIS NEARLY-TREBLED *WEIGHT.*

IT'S GOING TO BE A *LONG* NIGHT-- CHOCK FULL OF TERRORS.

BUT LOOK ON THE *BRIGHT* SIDE: IT BEATS A WEEK IN PHILADELPHIA.

NEXT: THE MENACE OF "MAD DOG"--AN UNEXPECTED INTIMACY--DANGER IN THE SHOWER--AND A STUDY IN HUMAN RELATIONS!

SCENES FROM A MENAGERIE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK

TM

"A FOWL NO MORE!"

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR * GENE COLAN PENCILER * KLAUS JANSON INKER * IRV WATANABE LETTERER * P. RACHE COLORIST

YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT TO **LOOK** AT HIM, BUT... ONCE, THIS SAD SACK OF POTATOES WAS A **DUCK**...

...UNTIL DR. BONG'S **EVOLVO-CHAMBER** RAN AMOK AND HE **CHANGED.**

PLUNK

NOW, FOWL NO MORE, HE ROAMS THE CITY STREETS A PLUCKED, BOW-LEGGED **MOCKERY** OF HIS FORMER SELF...PENNILESS, FRIEND-LESS, ALONE IN HIS DESPAIR.

YUP, HE'S JUST ANOTHER TYPICAL MANHATTANITE NAMED...

HOWARD THE HUMAN!

HE ROUNDS THE CORNER, EMERGING FROM THE SHADOWS OF 44th STREET INTO THE NEON **SLEAZE** OF EIGHTH AVENUE. IT'S SUMMER IN NEW YORK. SIDEWALKS OVERFLOW WITH HUMANITY. CHEAP STORES OVERFLOW WITH CHEAPER MERCHANDISE...

WHOO-**EE!** THAT DUDE AM **DAOWN!**

...BUT HE'S NOT BUYING, OR EVEN **BROWSING.**

GOT JUST THE STUFF TO LIFT YOUR **SPIRITS,** AMIGO...!

HIS MIND IS **ELSE-WHERE:**

ON **BEVERLY SWITZLER**... WHO KEPT HER PROMISE TO **WED** DR. BONG IN EXCHANGE FOR THE DUCK'S LIFE.

ON **FIFI**... DR. BONG'S HALF-HUMAN, HALF-FOWL FRENCH MAID, WHO **PERISHED** ABETTING HOWARD'S ESCAPE FROM HER **MASTER.***

HELP

GORGEO GIRLS

AND, OF COURSE, ON HIS CONDITION...

*AS DEPICTED IN **HTD** #18.--STEVE.

...AND HOW TO **IMPROVE** IT.

DEPRESSION HAS ITS **POSITIVE** ASPECTS. IF HIS EYES HADN'T BEEN ON THE **PAVEMENT**...!

UNOBTRUSIVELY, NOW...!

INTO THE BREAST POCKET IT **GOES!**

TOO MANY **OTHERS** AROUND WHO NEED IT AS BADLY AS **HE** DOES.

AND THE COMPETITION FOR **SURVIVAL** IN THESE STREETS IS **FIERCE**. BEST NOT TO LINGER. WADDLE **ON**...BUT NOT TOO **QUICKLY**...NOT SO'S ANYONE WOULD **NOTICE**.

EIGHTH AVENUE

PORT AUTHORITY **BUS TERMINAL**.

WHAT THE HEY...IT'S A **DESTINATION**.

A PLACE TO SCRUB UP, WASH THE **CITY** OFF HIS FACE.

MEN

R

UH-OH. **STUBBLE**. A FOREST OF **FUZZ** BURGEONING IN THE FERTILE **GRIME**.

DISGUSTING. BUT HE'LL DEAL WITH IT **LATER**.

FIRST... **WATER**.

COOL. CLEAR. REFRESHING.

THEN...

STILL CROONIN' THE SAME OL' *TUNE*, HUH, BOZO?

;WAAAUGH=

"TOWN WITH-OUT *PITY*"?

HE'S **SEEING** THINGS... **HEARING** THINGS...LIST OF POSSIBLE **CAUSES**: FATIGUE, HUNGER, STRESS, **HOPING** TOO HARD... HE RUBS HIS BLOODSHOT EYES...!

IF THE IMAGE HASN'T **FLED** WHEN HE REOPENS THEM, HE'S JUST LIABLE TO **VOMIT**.

AH-H-H! THERE! THAT'S BETTER!

WELL...LESS **DISQUIETING**, ANYWAY.

ONE CATASTROPHIC METAMORPHOSIS PER DIEM IS ABOUT HIS **LIMIT**.

;PSSST= HEY, YOUSE-- ;brepp=

HAH--?

TAP TAP

GOT ANY ;hyunngh; **SPARE CHANGE,** ;p-p-pffd; PAL?

NICKELS? DIMES? ;huh-hunngh; **PENNIES?** NO CONTRIBUTION TOO SMALL!

HELP SUPPORT A ;ggurgl; ***STARVIN' ARTIST!***

S-SORRY, FELLA-- I'M ON MY ***OWN*** AUSTERITY PROGRAM THESE DAYS!

AW, GEE-- DAT'S TOO ;thruuph; ***BAD!*** HOW 'BOUT BUYIN' ME COFFEE AN' A ***DONUT,*** DEN? ;slrrrp;

YOUSE CAN BE A ***PATRON O' DA ARTS*** FOR ;ghungha; SEBENTY-FIVE CENTS! WOTTA ***BARGAIN,*** HUH? ;rrrrumbl;

C-COULDJA STEP ***BACK*** A FOOT OR TWO-- PLEASE? I'M SENSITIVE TA ***ODORS,*** AN' YER ***BREATH*** IS--

HO-HA-HO-HA! A FOONEY MAN! ;vreccha; YOU'RE A ***GOOD SPORT,*** DIGGER!

WHAF

;waaaugh;

YOU WANNA GET ***RID*** OF OL' ***MAD DOG,*** ;freggh; DON'TCHA?

HOKAY, DEN PURCHASE ME A ***COLOR TV!***

THE PRICE KEEPS GOIN' UP AN' ***UP*** DOESN'T IT?

GOLLY-GOSH, YOU ***BETCHA*** ;wrdrrech; EVEN DERELICTS GOT-TA KEEP PACE WID ***INFLATION!***

MEN

I THOUGHT YA SAID YOU WERE AN ***ARTIST...!***

I ***AM!*** ;gthugh; I AM CREATING A MASTERPIECE OF DEGENERACY ;phuuugh; WHICH I HAVE TITLED--

" --BODY OF ***MAD DOG!***"

ANYWAY, I WILL ;ffreggh; SETTLE FOR **COFFEE!**

COFFEE SHOP

GRE

THAT'S **SMART,** MAD DOG. THERE'S A **STIG-MA** ON COLOR TV AMONG ARTISTS.

YOU WOULDN'T WANNA SELL OUT **THAT** CHEAP.

SORRY GENTELMEN, **SORRY!** VE ARE CLOSINK RIGHT ZIS VERY NOW MINUTE!

PIG OF A CLERK--YOU **LIE!**

PARDON ME...?

SKIP IT. WE'LL MOSEY ALONG...

NO!! ;phwecch; THE SWINE DOES NOT CLOSE FOR ANUDDER **HOUR!!** HE **DISCRIMINATES** AGAINST MAD DOG!!

WE CAN PAY! MY FRIEND IS **TREATING** ME! ;yuggh; YOU LET US **IN,** YOU HEAR?

I DON'T CARE **WHO'S** PAYINK! YOU **SMELL** BAD, DIRTY BUM!

GO **HOME!** TAKE A BATH! **SHOO!**

C'MON, MAD DOG, WE'LL--

NO!! ;phflug; NO MAN ADDRESSES **ME** AS IF I WERE A LOWLY **FLY** OR HABITAT THEREOF!

NO MAN SHOOS MAD DOG WITH IMPUNITY!! ;zphreeggh;

ASIDE, WORMS!!

VH-VHAT ISS HE GOINK TO **DO--?!**

WELL, HE **AIN'T** GONNA BUS TABLES, GRAMPS.

"MORE 'N LIKELY," HOWARD SIGHS, "HE'S GONNA GO **BERSERK.**"

YEAAARRGH

AND THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT HE **DOES**-- REARING, RAGING, OVERTURNING TABLES, SCARING THE PANTS OF PATRONS AND EMPLOYEES **ALIKE.**

"THEY'RE SO **PREDICTABLE,** THESE HAIRLESS APES," HOWARD MUSES-- "EXCEPT TO **ONE ANOTHER.**

"NOW WHY IS **THAT**--?"

--THE **PAIN,** AMY-- NOT MY OWN, BUT THE SUPERFLUOUS AGONY I INFLICT UPON **OTHERS.**

I **DESPISE** MYSELF FOR THAT!

SPLAT

UHM... ELTON, I THINK MAYBE WE OUGHTTA PUSH **ON.**

WE'RE SITTING IN A **COMBAT ZONE**-- Y'KNOW?

THAT'S **PROFOUND,** AMY-- LIKE YOUR SINEWY YET FEMININE **HANDS.**

ELTON... YOU'RE NOT **READING** ME.

BUT I **AM!** YOUR EVERY WORD AND GESTURE SPEAKS TO MY INNERMOST **LONGINGS.**

YOU **TOUCH** ME, MAKE ME **HOPE** AGAIN.

KILL!

;PSSST; YOU-- SHORT, DARK, AN' STUPID! WHAT'RE YA DOIN'?!

I'M TRYING TO STOP THIS CLOWN BEFORE HE--

WHY? WHAT DO YOU CARE? HE'S A FLAKE! AN' THE FOOD IN THIS DUMP AIN'T WORTH DEFENDIN'!

SCRAM, YA TURKEY! CUT YER LOSSES!

--UNLESS YA WANNA GO TA THE POUND WITH MAD DOG WHEN THE COPS ARRIVE!

SAY NO MORE, CHUM. I DUNNO WHAT POSSESSED ME--!

I WAS A BROKEN MAN, AMY-- DESPONDENT, DISPIRITED, DIPPY--!

BUT YOU RESURRECTED ME! YOU--

--EAT DEAD COWS!!

SAVAGES! GREASE DRINKERS!!

BUMP

HEY! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE--

WATCH?! ;phaaugh; THE TIMEX OF ETERNITY HAS GROUND TO A CHUCK! GET IT-- TRAVAIL-BLAZER?

Y-YOU'RE INSANE--NO! --WORSE--INSENSITIVE! AMY AND I WERE RELATING!

AW-W-W-W! DID I IN-TERRUPT YOUSE? ;ffhegh;

YOU-- AND THE SICK SOCIETY WHICH PRODUCED YOU!

NOBODY WANTS TO LISTEN-- TO GIVE-- TO EXHIBIT TENDER-NESS THESE DAYS!

WELL, I'M MAD AS HELL AND I'M NOT GONNA TAKE IT ANYMORE!

CRRAAASH

;tsk; AND TA THINK-- ALL THAT *GLORY* COULD'A BEEN *MINE!*

I'VE BEEN BEATEN, BETRAYED, VICTIMIZED, AND *BRUTALIZED--!*

BUT THIS TIME, I'M *FIGHTING BACK!!*

ELTON-- *HE'S* IN WORSE SHAPE THAN *YOU--!*

IT'S INCREDIBLE--THE CASUAL *EFFONTRY* WITH WHICH THESE-- *WE?--* HAIRLESS APES INVADE EACH OTHER'S--

UH-OH.

WHO--?

EXCUSE ME, I--

WELL, WELL--THE HERO'S *HEART-THROB!*

THE ANSWER'S *"NO,"* TOOTS! YOUR BOY-FRIEND CAN EXTRICATE *HIMSELF* FROM--

NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I *SAW* YOU WALK OUT ON THAT FRACAS--!

SO-- YOU'RE *OBSERVANT!*

SO *WHAT?*

I WANT TO LEAVE WITH *YOU--*WHILE ELTON'S *OCCUPIED!*

Hah...?

YOU SEE--*HE THINKS I'M HIS MIND!*

PLEASE-- YOU'RE EVERYTHING ELTON'S *NOT:* TOTALLY MISANTHROPIC!

WHA'--?

THAT'S A *COM-PLIMENT,* HONEST!

HERD THOSE *COWS* OUTTA YER EYES, BIMBO! KEEP *WALKIN'!*

YA CAN'T SUCCUMB TA *FLUMMERY* AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE!

RIGHT! SURVIVAL GETS TOP PRIORITY ...CAN'T EMBROILED IN ANY...

HAI EEEE

APPARENTLY, I'VE FAILED TO IMPRESS UPON YOU THE ***DESPERATE*** NATURE OF MY SITUATION.

;waaugh!

I DON'T ***WANT*** TO BE ANYONE ELSE'S REASONING FACULTIES--IT'S TOUGH ENOUGH THINKING FOR ***MYSELF!***

ELTON'S DRIVING ME MAD, AND I CAN'T ABIDE IT. I LIKE HIM, BUT I LIKE MY MIND, AND A GOOD MIND IS HARD TO FIND, ESPECIALLY WHEN MISPLACED--

SO TALK TO ME!!

!

SAY ***HAPPY*** THINGS-- ***STRONG*** THINGS-- ***POSITIVE*** THINGS--!

OR YOU'LL BITE THE CURB ***AGAIN,*** SO HELP ME!

WELL?!

;ulp! N-NICE ***WEATHER*** WE'RE HAVIN'--!

H-HOW 'BOUT THOSE ***METS?***

I--I HEARD THE ***STOCK MARKET*** RALLIED--!

UH... SEEN ***"STAR WARS"*** YET?

HOW'M I ***DOIN'?***

BEAUTIFULLY! IT'S THE MOST BANAL BABBLE I'VE HEARD IN ***WEEKS!*** DON'T STOP!

YOU CAN'T ***IMAGINE*** HOW I'VE YEARNED TO TALK TO A MAN WHO--

--WHO CAN ***WALK AWAY FROM ME!***

YEAH, WELL--IF ***THAT'S*** WHATCHA FIND ***ATTRACTIVE*** ABOUT ME, TOOTS--

EASE UP ON THE ***GRIP,*** HUH?

I ALMOST ***NEVER*** BOLT 'N' RUN IF IT MEANS LEAVIN' AN ARM ***BEHIND.***

BUT THE WIRY YOUNG WOMAN REFUSES TO **YIELD** A SINGLE POUND-PER-SQUARE-INCH. AND **HOWARD**--HUNGRY, DEPLETED, WEARY UNDER THE UNACCUSTOMED **WEIGHT** OF HIS HUMAN FORM--

--ALLOWS HIMSELF TO BE LED SOME THIRTY BLOCKS DOWNTOWN TO **AMY POPE'S** GREENWICH VILLAGE APARTMENT.

MY LITTLE RETREAT FROM **REALITY**--!

NOT EXACTLY A **PALACE**...BUT IT'S THE BEST I CAN DO ON A **WELFARE RECIPIENT'S** SALARY.

PUT ON SOME **COFFEE**, HUH, PAL? I'M GONNA SWITCH TO MY **SECRET IDENTITY!**

DON'T FALL **ASLEEP** ON THE WAY TO THE KITCHEN, HEAR?

SHORTLY...

THERE--COFFEE'S ON. NOW IF I CAN JUST FIND A COUPLE **TOOTHPICKS** TA PROP OPEN MY **EYELIDS**--!

AAH--WHY **BOTHER?** I OUGHTTA CRASH ON MY **FEET**--RIGHT HERE--!

BEATS SLEEPIN' IN A **DOORWAY**--!

IZZAT SO?? SHORT MEMORY YA GOT THERE--**BEEF-BRAIN!**

HUH--?

WHAT--YA **FORGOT** YER ABOUT TA SPEND THE NIGHT WITH A VIOLENCE-PRONE **MANIAC**--?!

AW, GET **OFF!** SHE'S NOT INSANE! SHE'S JUST GOT **SPUNK!**

SPUNK.

BONG

SPUNK?!

YEAH--**SPUNK!**

OR MAYBE SHE **IS** CRAZY--I DUNNO.

BUT SHE SORTA REMINDS ME --O' **BEVERLY.**

SHE DOESN'T FEEL OBLIGATED TA **CARE**--JUST TA **BE**, Y'KNOW?

:ahem: HOPE I'M NOT **INTRUDING**--!

DO YOU **REGULARLY** TALK TO YOURSELF **ALOUD**, UH--

HOWARD.

IS **THAT** YOUR SECRET IDENTITY?

UH-HUH. UNDER ALL THAT BAGGY **CAMOUFLAGE**--I'M SECRETLY **FEMALE!**

TRY'N KEEP IT UNDER YOUR **HAT**, OKAY, PAL?

TOO MANY **ELTONS** IN THE WORLD--IF THEY ALL **KNEW**--!

YA'D HAVETA SPEND **ALL DAY** EXERCISIN' YER TENSIONS AWAY, RIGHT?

I'M SLOWLY GETTIN' THE **PICTURE**-- HE BUYS THE COFFEE AN' POURS OUT HIS **HEART**--

--AND **YOU** DROWN IN THE BLOODY **DRAINAGE**, IS THAT IT?

:mmph: **CLOSE!** I MIGHT OPT FOR THE **EASY** WAY OUT, THOUGH--AND GO **CATATONIC** INSTEAD.

I TAKE IT YOU'VE **SURMISED** MY RELATIONSHIP TO ELTON... GRASPED THE AWESOME SIGNIFICANCE...

...OF ITS OPPRESSIVE **NON-EXISTENCE.**

MORE OR ;mmph; LESS! ELTON AND I USED TO WORK IN THE SAME *OFFICE*--GOT LAID OFF IN THE SAME *BUDGET CUTBACK*--!

SO YA STARTED GOIN' OUT TA *CONSOLE* EACH OTHER.

JEEZ--!

NO-- TO CONSOLE *HIM*! MY PRESENCE WAS INCI-DENTAL.

ANY REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE, ATTENTIVE WOMAN WOULD'VE SUFFICED.

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M SOMEWHAT *EMPATHIC* AND I'VE READ *CASTANEDA*.

THE COMBINATION PROVED TOO *POTENT*. I'M THE *EARTH-MOTHER* OF HIS DREAMS!

HE'S HOPE-LESSLY *SMITTEN*!

AND ;awp; YOU'RE *NOT*.

SO WHY DON'TCHA JUST *TELL* 'IM YA WERE ONLY BEIN' *KIND*, AN'--

SHLURP

TOO *DIRECT*, YA DOPE! AN' THE CREEP'S *EGO* WOULD NEVER SURVIVE THE *BLOW*!

SHE FIGGERS YER *NAIVE* FOR EVEN *ASKIN'*!

AN' SHE'S *RIGHT*! ;nyaah;

UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S MORE *COMPLICATED* THAN THAT. YOU SEE, I'VE ACTUALLY IMBUED ELTON WITH A MODICUM OF *SELF-CONFIDENCE*.

IF, I TELL HIM TO *BUG OFF*--WELL, NEED I ELABORATE?

MAYBE *I* COULD TALK TO HIM, OR--

;AAAGH; BUTT OUT, BUFFOON! MY GAWD, YER GOIN' *NATIVE*!!

I APPRECIATE THE **GESTURE**, HOWARD-- BUT IT WOULDN'T HELP. ELTON **NEVER** BELIEVES ANYTHING ANOTHER **MAN** TELLS HIM.

WE **WOMEN** ARE THE SOURCE OF ALL TRUTH.

FUNNY... IT MIGHT BE **FLATTERING**... IDOLATRY **IS** INTOXICATING, YOU KNOW...!

BUT ELTON FIGURES ALL WOMEN ARE **BORN** WITH "THE ANSWER."

HE CAN'T **ALLOW** US AN **INTELLECT**--OR WE'D BE AS THREATENING AS **MEN.**

WE'RE JUST SUPPOSE TO **EMOTE**--AND **CARE**--AND--

HEY--AM I **BORING** YOU WITH ALL THIS?

TA **TEARS,** SWEET-FACE!

I'D **RATHER** CONCENTRATE ON **YOU,** PAL-- BUT I'VE GOT MY STANDARDS TOO, Y' KNOW.

AND YOU NEED A **SHAVE!** WHATCHA SAY?

YEAH-- OKAY--ON **TWO** CONDITIONS: YA TELL ME YER **NAME**--AN' ANSWER ONE **QUESTION!**

AMY--AND THE BATH-ROOM'S THROUGH THAT DOOR!

PLEASED TA **MEET** YA, AMY--AND WRONG QUESTION.

I WAS JUST WONDERIN' --ARE **ALL** HAIRL--UH, **HUMAN** RELATIONSHIPS THIS--**CONVOLUTED?**

YOU MEAN AS MINE AND ELTON'S? ARE YOU **SERIOUS?**

BY **SOME** CRITERIA, OURS WOULD BE CONSIDERED **STRAIGHT-FORWARD!**

A SAD LITTLE GRIN ON HIS LIPS, HOWARD SHRUGS AND WADDLES INTO THE **WASHROOM...**

...WHILE ONE-HALF TO THREE-QUARTERS OF A WORLD AWAY, IN THE HIMALAYAN REDOUBT OF **DR. BONG...**

...THE BELL-HEADED BLACKGUARD AND HIS UNBLUSHING BRIDE, **BEVERLY BONG**, RETURN FROM THEIR NUPTIALS TO DISCOVER...

AND FIFI *WITH* HIM?? YOU MINDLESS, MISSHAPEN, *INCOMPETENT*--

THE DUCK HAS *ESCAPED*?!

NEEZ?

NEEZ.

:SOB: NEEZ!

OH-- *YIPPEE!*

HE *DID* IT! MY DUCKY FLEW THE *COOP*!

SILENCE!!

BONNGG

:OOOH:

I'LL NOT COUNTENANCE ANOTHER SUCH OPEN DISPLAY OF *DISLOYALTY*!

YOU ARE MY *WIFE* NOW, BEVERLY--AND I *DEMAND* YOUR *ALLEGIANCE*.

SO REMEMBER--I CAN *KILL* AS EASILY AS *PARALYZE* WITH A SINGLE PEAL!

TAKE HER TO MY *CHAMBERS*! I SHALL JOIN HER PRESENTLY.

FIRST, I MUST SEE TO A SMALL *CHORE*!

THE *EXTER-MINATION* OF HOWARD THE DUCK!

IF, AS MY CREATURES ATTEST, HE FLED WITH FIFI IN A *FLYING BONGER*--

--IT SHAN'T BE *TOO* DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THEIR WHEREABOUTS.

NEW YORK POST

BUGLE

MISSG- ABDUCTION

IN THE HANDS OF AN INEXPERIENCED PILOT SUCH AS **FIFI**--

--THE CRAFT'S DISTINCTIVE DESIGN WOULD MOST CERTAINLY **ATTRACT** ATTEN--

AH-HA!

DAILY BUGLE FINAL

UFO CRASH IN CENTRAL PARK

A DUCK-LIKE CREATURE FOUND INSIDE OF CR

BONNNGG

SO FIFI HAS ALREADY MET HER **FATE**--BUT THERE IS NO MENTION OF **HOWARD!**

HE **LIVES**, THEN--AND I HAVE MILES TO GO BEFORE I **SLEEP!**

:HEH:

SUNRISE OVER MANHATTAN: THE SKY EXPLODES IN FLAMING ORANGE AND PASSION PINK...

...ROUGHLY THE **SAME** HUES WHICH CHARACTERIZE THE PRESENT EMOTIONAL STATE...

...OF ONE **ELTON BURKE.**

THEY'VE BEEN UP THERE--ALONE--TOGETHER--**FOR HOURS--!**

AND IT'S MY **FAULT**--FOR NOT DECLARING MY **LOVE**--

--FOR NOT GIVING AMY WHAT SHE **NEEDED!**

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO **DO**--?

I--I CAN'T LET HER **SUFFER** IN THE ARMS OF SOME **STRANGER--!**

I **RESPECT** HER TOO MUCH!

AMY!! IT'S ME--ELTON!! LET ME **IN!!** I **BLEED** WITH YOU!!

BOOM BOOM

AMY!!

I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF YOUR **CHEAPENING** YOURSELF IN THESE CASUAL--

OMIGOSH!!

CRUNCH

:yawn: ELTON-- IS THAT YOU? WHAT'S THE MATTER--?

AMY, I--I CAME TO TELL YOU-- HOW I FEEL-- BUT-- BUT--

BUT WHAT?

THAT--! THAT THING ON YOUR COUCH!

HUH? ELTON, WHAT ARE YOU T--

:EEEK:

:snort:

OH, MY GOD-- FIRST ROACHES, THEN MICE, AND NOW-- D-D-D--

--OH MY GOD.

:snort: WHA'-- WHAT'S ALL TH' COMMOTION ABOUT?

IS IT MORNIN' --ALREADY? :yaawn:

:aaagh: IT TALKS!!

WHAT DOES--?

NAH--ON SECOND THOUGHT-- LEMME MULL IT OVER IN THE SHOWER--!

ELTON--!!

IT'S OKAY, AMY--JUST HANG IN THERE!

YOU'RE TOO MUCH WOMAN TO COME UN-HINGED AT A LITTLE THING LIKE THIS!

YOU TELL'ER, ELTON. :yawn:

ELTON-- WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU-- "TOO MUCH WOMAN?"

HMMM...?

SLAM

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A CHICK WHO'S "NOT ENOUGH WOMAN?"

IS THIS A JOKE, AMY--OR AN ATTACK?

NEITHER! I'M JUST TRYING TO DEFINE--

WHOOSH

AH-H-H-H! THAT'S WONDERFUL--!

SPLISHY, SPLOOSHY, WET AN' WARM--!

MUSTN'T FORGET THE BACK-- SCRUBBA-DUBBA--

NUTS! CAN'T REACH THE BR--

C-CAN'T REACH?! I-- I'M SHORT AGAIN!! WITH FEATHERS!!

I--I'M A DUCK!!

ALL THAT EXCITEMENT LAST NIGHT-- MUSTA GOT MY ADRENALIN PUMPIN' AN REVERSED THE EFFECTS O'--

BOWWWG

OH

NO.

ARE YOU SURPRISED, FOWL? DID YOU TRULY THINK YOU'D ELUDED ME?

DID YOU??

C'MON... DO I LOOK LIKE AN OPTIMIST TA YOU?! I JUST NEVER FIGGERED...

...BEV COULD GET BORING SO SOON!

NEXT:

SUDD

THE SCRUBBING BUBBLE THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN!

HOWARD THE DUCK

35¢ CC

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

CLEANSE! PURIFY! DISINFECT! DEODORIZE!

MY BLEACH, BORAX, AND HEAVY-DUTY ENZYMES WILL SCOUR YOU FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, DUCK!

THE WONDROUS WATERFOWL FACES THE FOAMING ACTION OF

SUDD. THE SCRUBBING BUBBLE THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR
GENE COLAN ARTIST
KLAUS JANSON INKER
J. COSTANZA, LETTERER
JAN COHEN, COLORIST

HERE'S LIVING PROOF THAT THE CONCEPT OF PRIVACY IS IN MORTAL DANGER:

THIS IS THE SHOWER STALL IN AMY POPE'S LOWER MANHATTAN APARTMENT.

AND THE FIEND CROUCHING BETWEEN HOWARD AND HYGIENE IS--

DR. BONG!!

Y-YOU OUGHTTA BE ASHAMED O' YERSELF!

WH-WHY AREN'T YOU AT HOME-- WITH YER NEW BRIDE?!

SCRUBBA-DUB DEATH!

YOU DARE?!

CRRUNCH

ENRAGED, DR. BONG SLAMS DOWN HIS TITANIUM STEEL **CLAPPER HAND**...A BIT TOO FORCEFULLY.

THE WOODEN **FLOOR** BENEATH THE TILE GIVES **WAY**--AS DOES THE **PLASTER** BELOW THAT.

NO! THIS CAN'T BE-- NOT **NOW**--!

--NOT WHEN I'M HOLDIN' A KING-HIGH **FLUSH!**

THUS, FOWL AND FOE FIND THEMSELVES UNWELCOME **INTRUDERS** IN WHAT HAD BEEN A VERY **SERIOUS** ALL-NIGHT **POKER GAME!**

YA CRUMB! I'M DOWN 173 CLAMS TANIGHT!!

WATCH OUT FOR THAT BOWLIN' BALL ON HIS LEFT HAND, MARTY!

AN' I WAS JUST ABOUT TA WIN IT BACK WHEN YOU--!

IT'S AS GOOD AS BOLTED TA THE FLOOR, JIMBO!

LET'S GET 'IM!!

AN' THAT'S MY CUE TA SAY, "TA-TA!"

I CAN FIGGER WHAT MUST'VE HAPPENED TA BRING BONG TA NEW YORK ON HIS WEDDING NIGHT.

SOMEHOW I CAN'T SEE HIS TYPE RECONCILIN' HIMSELF TO A WIFE WITH DIVIDED LOYALTIES.

KLUNK

SO NATURALLY, HE OPTED FOR THE QUICKEST-- AN' DUMBEST-- SOLUTION!

PROB'LY, BEV WAS HAPPY-- AN' SHOWED IT-- WHEN THEY GOT BACK HOME FROM THE CEREMONY--

--AN' FOUND OUT I'D ESCAPED CASTLE BONG!

ELIMINATING ME!

BUT IF HE'S EXPECTIN' ME TO MAKE IT EASY FOR 'IM--

--HE'S BONGED HIMSELF ONCE TOO OFTEN!

ASIDE, YOU OAFS!!

NONE MAY IMPINGE THE PERSON NOR IMPEDE THE TERRIBLE PURPOSE OF DR. BONG.!!

MY GAWD-- HE TALKS LIKE A LAWYER--!

GNATS!! I SHOULD SQUASH YOU FOR THAT IMPRECATION ALONE!

BUT, AS YOU REMIND ME OF MY IGNORANT CHILDHOOD PEERS--

--I SHALL BE MERCIFUL--

--AND MERELY PARALYZE YOU FOR THE NEXT NINETY DAYS!

BONNNGGG

UNNNGH!

C-CAN'T MOVE-- THAT S-SOUND--!

UH-OH.., NO POINT ASKIN' FOR WHOM THAT BELL TOLLS.

IN THE ALLEY OUTSIDE, THE WATERFOWL HEARS IT, TOO.. AND FLINCHES.

NO POINT TRYIN' TA RUN, EITHER! IF HE COULD TRACK ME TA AMY'S SHOWER--!

NOPE-- TIME TA STAND AN' FIGHT!

BY QUASIMODO'S HUMP-- IF THAT HOMEWRECKING FOWL HAS ELUDED ME AGAIN, I'LL--!

BLAST! NO SIGN OF HIM!

WAIT-- THERE IN THE ALLEY!

THE SHADOWS REVEAL AS MUCH AS THEY HIDE!

HOWARD... I'M *COMING* FOR YOU.

IT'S USELESS TO CONCEAL YOURSELF ANY LONGER. I *KNOW* WHERE YOU ARE.

YEAH--BUT YA NEVER FIGGERED I MIGHT'A *PLANNED* IT THAT WAY--DIDJA, CHIME-FACE?

SO JUST KEEP ON COMIN', CHUMP--AN' WE'LL HAVE OUR *OWN* PRIVATE LITTLE--

BOING!

EH--WHAT--?

NO!!

--GONG SHOW

GOTCHA!!

NNNNNNGG

N-N-NOW I G-GOTTA H-H-HOPE--

I H-H-HIT A S-SOUR EN-N-NOUGH N-N-NOTE--!!

:AAARGH:

THE *EFFECT* OF EACH *PEAL* DEPENDS ON ITS PITCH AN' *INTENSITY*--!

HIS WHOLE BODY'S *PITCHIN'*--MUST'A BEEN *PRETTY* INTENSE!

BUT WILL IT *DO* ANYTHING--BESIDES WAKE UP HALF THE *NEIGHBORHOOD?*

THE ANSWER COMES A MOMENT LATER...

PFFFT

...WHEN, DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS TO PREVENT IT, BONG VANISHES FROM NEW YORK TO POINTS UNKNOWN!

THE DANGER PAST, HOWARD SLUMPS AGAINST THE WALL, **DRAINED** OF ENERGY--YET **OVERFLOWING** WITH BITTER **MEMORIES** OF THE EVENTS WHICH **LED** HIM TO THIS CITY, THIS ALLEYWAY, THIS TRASHCAN LID--!

ANGRILY, HE RECALLS HIS ABDUCTION WITH **BEVERLY SWITZLER** FROM THE DECK OF THE **S.S. DAMNED**...

...ON THE BACK OF A **CONCRETE SWAN!**

SPLASH

NEEZ!

NEEZ?

NEEZ!!

BONNNG

...THE BELL-HEADED EX-JOURNALIST WHO **CREATED** THE WEIRD BEASTS AND **ENSLAVED** THEM.*

...WHO PROMPTLY **DELIVERED** THEM INTO THE CLUTCHES OF **DR. BONG**...

THE DUCK AND HIS COMPANION WERE **RESCUED** BY A NEEZING CLAQUE OF STRANGE **CREATURES**...

*AS SEEN IN **HTD** #15 & 17. --STEVE.

BONG HAD **SIMILAR** PLANS FOR HOWARD! THE FOWL WAS CONSIGNED TO THE **EVOLVO-CHAMBER** FOR GENETIC RE-PROGRAMMING.

--WAS HOWARD THE **HAIRLESS APE**--

HOWEVER, THE EXPERIMENT WENT **AWRY**--!

--**NOT** A HALF-HUMAN, HALF-DUCK **MATE** FOR BONG'S FRENCH MAID **FIFI**.*

AND WHAT **EMERGED** FROM THE TANK--

*HTD #18. --S.G.

NEVERTHELESS, FIFI--FOR SOME UNGODLY REASON--WAS **CAPTIVATED** WITH THE "NEW HOWARD"...

...AND ABETTED HIS **ESCAPE** FROM BONG'S REDOUBT.

THAT FLIGHT ENDED IN **TRAGEDY**. FIFI **BOUGHT IT** WHEN THEIR FLYING BONGER **CRASHED** IN CENTRAL PARK.

FEATHERLESS, DESPONDENT, HOWARD DRIFTED INTO THE LIFE OF **AMY POPE**, WHOSE MINISTRATIONS OF **TLC** ACTIVATED HIS ADRENAL GLANDS, AMONG OTHERS...

...AND TRIGGERED A BIOCHEMICAL **REVERSAL** OF THE EVOLVO-CHAMBER'S EFFECTS. *

*HTD #18 & 19. --S.

WHICH LEAVES ME--RIGHT BACK WHERE I **STARTED** WHEN I FIRST **BLINKED** **INTA** THIS COCKA-MAMIE WORLD!

HOMELESS... PENNILESS... JOBLESS... **FORLORN**...

...AN' NO **PROSPECTS** IN SIGHT!

LOOK OUT, WORLD--HERE COMES A WINNER.

YUP... A LITTLE **OLDER**, A LITTLE **WISER**, AN' A WHOLE LOT **MEANER**...

...IN EVERY SENSE O' THE W--

:WAAAUGH:

SCREEECH

CREEP! DEGENERATE!! ALLEY-LURKING SLIME!!

WHAT'RE YA **DOIN'** PROWLIN' BACK HERE AT **SIX A.M.**, SHORT STUFF?!

753-H1

SING, MIDGET!! EVEN IN DAYLIGHT, NO SANE NEW YORKER WOULD--UH--HEY--!

Y-YOU'RE-- A-- DUCK!!

THANKS, PAL--THAT MAKES IT OFFICIAL! YA CAN GO HOME AGAIN!

AN' IT'S JUST AS DEPRESSIN' AS YA REMEMBERED IT! SIGH

HAPPY COLLECTIONS, CHUM!

OKAY--SO NOW WHAT? HOW'M I GONNA LIVE?

GOTTA SCRAPE UP SOME BUCKS FOR FOOD--

--LODGING, CIGARS, CLOTHING--

CLOTHING?

OMIGOSH!!

SWISH

NUTS! I CAN'T PARADE THE STREETS O' NEW YORK AU NATUREL!

GOTTA DIG UP SOME THREADS!

WHERE--?

THERE!

ONLY--IT'S NOT MY POLICY TA--

ULP STEAL.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

...HE IS DESPERATE.

AND DESPERATE DUCKS COMMIT DESPERATE ACTS.

BUT HARBOR NO ILLUSIONS--!

THE UNIVERSE DOESN'T CARE PEAS FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

ONE PAYS FOR SUCH MISDEEDS...

...IN HUMILIATION, IF NOTHING ELSE.

FOXY LADY

"FOXY LADY!" MY DUDS AN' MY KARMIC *PENALTY* ALL IN *ONE!*

COFFEE SHOP

Coca-Cola

INER

BUT THAT'S OKAY-- I *LIKE* PACKAGE DEALS-- SWIFT, TIDY UN-COMPLICATED--

--AN' UTTERLY *RUTHLESS!*

:SIGH: BUT THE OVERRIDING *QUESTION* STILL REMAINS:

FROM THIS MOMENT *ON,* WHAT'S MY LIFE GONNA *CONSIST* OF--?

DISHWASHER WANTED... APPLY INSIDE

WHOA! SYNCHRONICITY STRIKES *AGAIN!*

INSIDE...

:Z-Z-Z: AW, LOUISE :SNORF: I *DO* LOVE YA :Z-Z-Z:

I'M JUST :NNRF: NOT READY :Z-Z-Z: TOENAILS--

:PSSST: *HEY!* GREASED LIGHTNIN'!

RAP!

HUH-- WHOZAT--?

:YAWN: WHAT D'YA WA-- WA-- WA--

WA-HA-HA-HA-HA

'S-SCUSE ME, SON-- B-BUT Y-YOU'RE A-- AN' THAT *OUTFIT--!*

MENU

YEAH, YEAH-- WHEN YA FINISH YER *LAUGHIN'* *JAG,* LEMME KNOW.

HO-- HO-- *HOKAY*-- WH-WHAT'S :HOHA: ON YOUR :HEE HEE: *MIND--?*

I SAW THE *SIGN* IN THE WINDOW-- I WANTED TA *APPLY* FOR THE JOB--

FOXY

YOU GOT IT!!

:HAW: WE'LL PUT UP A *NEW* SIGN:

"OUR DISHES UNTOUCHED BY *HUMAN HANDS!"*

C'MON... I'LL SHOW YA THE *KITCHEN!* :HOHO:

CHEE... IS *DAT* THE NEW GUY, BOSS?

DAT *SHRIMP* IS GONNA REPLACE *ME*?!

AW-W-W, *NOBODY* COULD REPLACE *YOU*, SUDD--BUT HE'LL HAVETA *DO*.

SHOW 'IM THE *ROPES*, WILLYA?

LAST DAY ON THE *JOB*, SUDD?

YUP! TAMORROW, I TAKE AN *EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENCY* WIT' DA *SOOFI* CORPORATION!

SOOFI?

IT'S A *ANTONYM*-- Y'KNOW, *INITIALS!*

SAVE OUR OFFSPRING FROM INDECENCY! WE TRACK DOWN IMMORAL BOOKS, PERVERTED *MOVIES*, DEPRAVED *RECORDS*...

...AN' WE *BOIN* 'EM...

...BEFORE DEY CAN POLLUTE DA *VOITUE* OF OUR *KIDS!*

YUP! WIT' SOOFI EVER VIGILANT, NO DOITY *WOID* IS EVER *HOID!*

WE'RE *WOIKIN'* ON *THOUGHT.*

VERY COMMENDABLE! BET IT'S *FUN*, TOO, HUH--

--READIN' ALL THAT SALACIOUS *TRASH* AN' LOOKIN' FOR THE *GOOD PARTS*?

HUH--?!

YOUSE TAKE DAT BACK!! WE DON'T SERL OUR MINDS WIT' DAT FILTH!!

TH-THEN... HOW D'YA KNOW IT'S... *"DOITY?"*

'CUZ DA SUPREME SOOFI SEZ SO! IZZAT CLEAR?!

NOW... LEMME SHOW YA HOW TA SCRUB A TUMBLER!

WUMP

AL-ALWAYS TAKE HIS LEOTARDS OFF FIRST, RIGHT?

:HEH:

AND SO IT GOES... TEN HOURS OF DUMB JOKES, SOOFI WISDOM...

...AND A CAVALCADE OF FOOD-ENCRUSTED PLATES, BOWLS CUPS, SAUCERS, AND STAINLESS STEEL.

QUITTIN' TIME, KIDDO--HOW YOUSE HOLDIN' UP?

:WAAUGH:

:HAW:

AAH, YOUSE'LL GET USED TO IT! YER A NATURAL! YOUSE TAKE TA DA WATER--

--LIKE A DUCK!!

ANYWAY, DERE'S SUMPIN' ELSE I GOTTA SHOW YOUSE!

HOPE YOUSE IS TECHNICALLY-MINDED, SHRIMP...

HAH...?

...'CUZ CLEANIN' DA MIKERWAVE OVEN IS YER JOB, TOO!

NOW WATCH CLOSE--DIS IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY!

FOIST, OPEN DA DOOR... DEN DEPRESS DA BUTTON ON DA SPRAY CAN... DEN, WIPE!

SSSS

I KNOW IT'S COMPLEX... BUT I GOTS FAITH IN YOUSE, KIDDO!

Foam

Oven Cle

I DIDN'T BECOME A *MASTER* OVERNIGHT, NEITHER! SO HANG IN DERE!

SHE'S ALL YERS!!

MY SINKS, MY BRILLO, MY LEMON-FRESH *JOY--!*

EVEN DA *MIKER-WAVE* OVEN!!

ON

CLICK

IT'S THE FIRST AND ONLY CARELESS MOVE SUDD HAS MADE IN HIS BE-LOVED KITCHEN.

...AND IT'S DISASTROUS!

THE "MIKERWAVES" BOMBARD THE AEROSOL CAN LEFT IN THE OVEN...

...THE PRESSURIZED CONTENTS EXPAND... AND EXPLODE...!

AND THE ROOM IS INUNDATED IN A TIDAL WAVE OF FOAM AND FLUORO-CARBON GASES!

BLAM!

WHA--WHAT *HAPPENED?!* WHERE'S *SUDD??*

I--I DUNNO-- I THINK--HE'S TAKIN' *HISTORY'S BIGGEST BUBBLE-BATH!*

SAD TO SAY... THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS A SMIDGEN MORE BIZARRE THAN THAT.

MICROWAVE OVENS, YOU SEE, EMIT SMALL-- BUT SOMETIMES LARGE--QUANTITIES OF RADIATION.

...THOSE DEVILISH LI'L ROENTGENS HAVE WORKED THEIR MAGIC ON SUDD!

AND JUST AS RADIATION ONCE CHANGED A CERTAIN SPIDER, JUST AS IT ONCE IMBUED A BLIND LAWYER WITH FOUR COMPENSATORY SUPER-SENSES...*

*AMAZING FANTASY #15 AND DAREDEVIL #1. --STEVE.

:HRRGH:

CLEAN YOUSE-- PURIFY YOUSE--!!

:HRRGH:

OKAY-- SO I WAS WRONG.

HE IS HISTORY'S BIGGEST BUBBLE-BATH!

:HRRGH: NASTY! DOITY! CLEANSE YOUSE--!!

WHAM

I STILL THINK YOU'RE VASTLY UNDERESTIMATIN' HIM, FOXY!

:HEH:

:HEH HEH:

IF HE'S REALLY GOT THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH OF A CAN OF OVEN CLEANER--

PLAYPERSON

"--HE COULD BE HISTORY'S BIGGEST BLOOD-BATH!"

S-SUDD?...YA GOTTA CONTROL YOURSELF, BOY...THAT WAS PETE, YOUR BOWLIN' PARTNER!

HRRGH!

WITH A MONOMANIA TO TERRIFY ANY BUT THE STAUNCHEST NEO-NAZI, SUDD GIVES PURSUIT...!

BUT THE DETERGENT DREADNOUGHT IS BEYOND BOTH REASON AND CARING.

D-DIDJA SEE WHAT HE DID TA THAT COUNTER?!

HE'S NOT JUST SOAP--HE'S AN ABRASIVE!

"AND HE'S ON A SANITARY RAMPAGE," CRIES THE RESTAURANTEUR.

"WE GOTTA STOP HIM, FOXY--BUT HOW??

CRRRAASSH

"WAIT! I GOT IT!!"

HOT WATER!

WE'LL RINSE THAT GUNK RIGHT OFF HIM--

IF WE CAN TEAR HIM AWAY FROM HIS CRUSADE!

=HRRGH= CAUGHT YOUSE--LOOKIN' AT GURL!

GET YER BUCKET READY TA HEAVE, BOSS!

I'LL GET HIS ATTENTION FOR YA!

HEY--SOAP-SCUM!!

*

*IN DEFENSE OF SENSITIVE READERS, WE OMIT THE STREAM OF OBSCENITIES WITH WHICH HOWARD DISTRACTS SUDD. --S.G.

≡HRRGH≡ WHO SAID DAT SPICY STUFF?!

I'LL SCOUR 'EM!!

≡ULP≡ WELL...IT WORKED.

PREPARE FOR "OPERATION: DEM, DESE, AN' DOUSE!"

RIGHT! WET 'IM DOWN--

NOW!!

SSPLASH

UH-OH... NOTHIN'S HAPPENIN'!

UH-OH-- YES IT IS! HE'S GETTIN' TALLER AN' BROADER!

NUTS! I FORGOT--!

THE CLEANSER'S A CONCENTRATE! ITS POWER IS RELEASED IN WATER!

IN THAT CASE, I'VE GOT A SUGGESTION:

LET'S LET, 'IM GO AN' PRETEND WE NEVER HEARD OF 'IM!

SO THAT'S THE KIND OF EMPLOYEE YOU ARE, EH?

DESERTING AT THE FIRST SIGN OF AN EMERGENCY MY INSURANCE DOESN'T COVER!

TYPICAL! NOBODY SYMPATHIZES WITH THE SMALL BUSINESSMAN TODAY--!

ISN'T THIS THE SAME STUFF SUDD GOT SPRITZED WITH?

UH... BOSS...?

THAT CAN...

ANTIDOTE: vinegar juice of lemo FOLLOWED BY milk and gg whites

'CAUSE IF IT IS--WE GOT OUR SOLUTION!

WORKING FEVERISHLY, THE DUCK AND HIS EMPLOYER COMBINE THE MALODOROUS INGREDIENTS...

...WHILE THE FUTURES OF SMALL ENTERPRISE AND UNCOUNTED LIVES HANG IN THE BALANCE!

=PHEW= THIS STUFF REEKS!!

DID I PROMISE YOU A ROSE GARDEN?

C'MON--POUR IT ON!

SUDD'S ALREADY FOUND HIS WAY TA EIGHTH AVENUE--

--THE SLEAZE CAPITAL O' THE UNIVERSE!

=HRRGH= DISINFECT YOUSE--DEODORIZE YOUSE--!!

AW, C'MON, MAN--PUT ME DOWN! I'M CLEAN!

THIS BLACK STUFF DON'T COME OFF!

MY--MY FACE--HE SCRUBBED IT CLEAN--AWAY--!

=UNNGH=

CAUTION: DESPITE APPEARANCES, DO NOT INTERPRET SUDD'S RAMPAGE AS RACIST. HE'LL KILL ANYBODY--"ADULT" BOOKSELLERS, FALLEN WOMEN, DEALERS IN ILLICIT SUBSTANCES, LIBERALS--OF ANY COLOR OR CREED.

AND THE LOCALS LOVE HIM FOR IT!

RIGHT ON!

TROUNCE 'EM, BRO'!

GIVE 'EM HELL!

NOW THERE'S AN UNEXPECTED WRINKLE--HE'S A HOMICIDAL MANIAC, BUT SOCIALLY USEFUL.

WHADDAYA THINK, BOSS? SHOULD WE...?

I DUNNO... THIS URBAN BLIGHT RANKLES ME, TOO...

ON THE OTHER HAND, WE GOTTA CONSIDER THE PRESERVATION OF INTELLIGENT LIFE...AN YER INSURANCE PREMIUMS.

TRUE, TRUE... BUT WHAT ABOUT SUDD? ISN'T HE INTELLIGENT, TOO?

THANKS, BOSS-- YA JUST MADE UP MY MIND!

GLURGLGLURG

HRRGH

THE POTENT MIXTURE HAS BARELY LEFT THE BOWL WHEN SUDD RECOILS...IN AGONY!

THE PARTY'S OVER. HIS BUBBLE HAS BURST... ALL OF THEM, IN FACT...

BAM

...IN A SERIES OF FIRE-CRACKER REPORTS...

POP

BAM

...UNTIL NOTHING REMAINS OF THE FOAMING FIEND...

...BUT A SPARKLING-CLEAN SIDEWALK...

...EMBLAZONED WITH AN EERILY FAMILIAR TATTOO!

:WAAUGH: GET THIS! WE'RE HEROES TA EVERY DEGENERATE ON THE BLOCK!

I HATE MYSELF.

GOOD!!

SPLAT

WE HATE YOU, TOO!

FOR SABOTAGING THE FIRST EFFECTIVE CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN--

--IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD'S HISTORY!!

BUT EVEN YOU CAN'T STOP A BLOCK ASSOCIATION GONE BERSERK!! :HRRGH:

NEXT

THE BATTLE ROYAL--THE ORIGINAL BEVERLY SWITZLER--THE MUU-MUU'S SECRET--THE CLEAN MACHINE--A DEADLY DANCE--AND WORST OF ALL...

THE SINISTER SOOFI ...LIVE and IN PERSON! ONE NITE ONLY!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

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SINCE YOU *REFUSE* TO DO IT *YOURSELF*, DUCK, THE TASK FALLS TO *US*--

--TO CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!

SUCH IS THE MISSION OF THE *SINISTER* SOOFI!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

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STEVE GERBER • WRITER/EDITOR
CARMINE INFANTINO • SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST
KLAUS JANSON • INKER
I. WATANABE • LETTERER
GLYNIS WEIN • COLORIST

...BY **DISSOLVING** THE FIRST **HERO** TO WALK THIS MEAN STREET IN MANY A MOON:

SUDD, THE SCRUBBING BUBBLE WHO WALKED LIKE A **MAN**...

...AND WAGED A NEVER-ENDING **BATTLE** FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE...

...AND HIS OWN SWEET **WAY** IN MATTERS OF **MORALITY.**

HAH! NOW WE GOT 'EM! THAT'S A **BLIND ALLEY!**

INTERESTINGLY, SINCE BERSERKERS, UNLIKE POLITICIANS, CAN'T BE **BOUGHT OFF,** SUDD'S DEATH-DEALING DECENCY CRUSADE WAS THE FIRST **EFFECTIVE** CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN IN THE AVENUE'S **HISTORY.**

HUH--?!

PERHAPS UNDERSTANDABLY, THEN, THE SLEAZE-BELEAGUERED LOCALS **RESENTED** ITS ABRUPT **TERMINATION.**

DEY GAVE US DA **SLIP,** MELROY!

NO! DERE AIN'T NO WAY! DEY'RE **HIDIN'**--SOMEWHERE!

TOIN DIS ALLEY INSIDE-OUT! DEY **GOTTA** BE HERE!

*BUT WHEN AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH TURNS UP NEITHER **HIDE** NOR **FEATHER**...!*

I COULD'A **SWORE**--!

C'MON--WE'LL TRY THE NEXT ALLEY! **NUTS!**

THROUGHOUT, THE **DENIZENS** OF THE BACK STREET--THE HAGGARD OLD **WINOS** AND THE PUFFY LADY IN THE **MUU-MUU** HAVE MAINTAINED AN EERILY CONSPIRATORIAL **SILENCE.**

YUK YUK

HA HA

"HO HO HO"

HEE HEE HEE

BUT WHEN THE RE-FORMERS HAVE DE-PARTED...!

YA CAN DEFLATE YER **CHEEKS** NOW, TOOTS! WE **DID** IT!

YOU BOYS ARE OH **SO-O-O** LUCKY I FOUND THIS DRESS IN THE **THRIFT STORE--!**

YESSY! ;TEE HEE; THANKS TO MY **EXTRA-A-VAGANT** TASTES!

I'M JUST NOT **COMFY** IN ANY-THING SMALLER THANT A **TENT!**

I ACCOUTRE MYSELF **LARGER** THAN LIFE--BE-CAUSE I **AM!**

UH-HUH! NOW YOU TAKE **CARE--!**

Y' KNOW, BOSS, THERE'S A NOT-SO-SUBTLE **IRONY** IN MY BEIN' RESCUED BY ONE O'-- **THEM!**

ONE OF **WHICH** --A WOMAN OR A **WACKO?**

INTERBOROUGH

UPTOWN

LISTEN, DUCKO, TO **SURVIVE** IN THIS WORLD YOU EITHER GOT-TA **BE** INSANE-- OR **KNOW** SOME-ONE WHO IS!

;TSK; AN' THEY SAY NOTHIN' EVER CHANGES! THE OPERATIVE WORD USEDTA BE **"RICH!"**

"AH, THERE'S THE RUB!"

COMPLETE MASSAGE $5.00

CLOSED BY ORDER of MAYOR

*THUS, HOWARD AND THE RES-TAURANT OWNER WHO BEFRIENDED AND **EMPLOYED** HIM HOP AN UP-TOWN TRAIN TO THE LATTER'S **APARTMENT.***

*WHILE HERE ON EIGHTH AVENUE, BEHIND THE BOARDED-UP FACADE OF A SEEDY **MASSAGE PARLOR...***

*...A STRANGE AND OMINOUS **CONVOCATION** IS CALLED TO **ORDER!***

SUDD IS **DEAD**-- RINSED AWAY LIKE SO MUCH SOAPY **FILM.**

WE ARE **POORER** FOR THAT, FELLOW **SOOFI**-- BUT **STRONGER**, AS WELL!

WE RIDE THE CLEANSING EDGE OF HISTORY'S ***SQUEEGEE***, BRETHREN!

THE TIME HAS COME TO EMBARK ON ***OUR*** CRUSADE TO SANITIZE SOCIETY---!

NOW! WHILE THE TRAGEDY OF SUDD'S ***MARTYRDOM*** IS FRESH IN OUR ***MEMORIES!***

RECITE THE SOOFI PLEDGE!!

WE ARE THE ***SOOFI,*** PLEDGED TO ***S***AVE ***O***UR ***O***FFSPRING ***F***ROM ***I***NDECENCY! WE ARE BRAVE, LOYAL, OBEDIENT--

--AND ***PURE*** IN EVERY THOUGHT, DEED, AND EXTERNAL ORGAN!

WE ARE THE ***SOOFI,*** SWORN TO ***DIE*** THAT OUR CHILDREN YET ***UNBORN*** MAY LIVE IN ANTISEPTIC PEACE!

GO FORTH AND DO YOUR ***DUTY***-- BUT REMEMBER, WE ARE ***DEATH COMMANDOS OF LOVE!***

WE OPPOSE ***IMMORALITY,*** NOT IMMORAL ***PEOPLE!*** KILL-- WITH COMPASSION.

I SHALL ATTEND ***PERSONALLY*** TO ASSASSINS OF ***SUDD!***

YOUR DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE WARMS MY ***HEART,*** BRETHREN!

MEANWHILE, UPTOWN...

YA DON'T WASTE TIME, DO YA?

NOPE-- I DECIDED I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THE RESTAURANT BIZ IN NEW YORK.

AND ONCE I REACH A DECISION, I ACT ON IT!

I'LL CALL THE BANK FROM THE BUS STATION, TELL 'EM TO RE-POSSESS THE FIXTURES-- AND IT'S BACK TO OHIO FOR ME!

OHIO, HUH? I'M FROM THAT NAPE O' THE WOODS, TOO...SOMETIMES.

I THINK O' MYSELF AS A REFUGEE...

...FROM CLEVELAND.

MIND IF I ASSEMBLE A SANDWICH HERE, WHILE WE CHIT-CHAT...?

'COURSE NOT! WHAT'S MINE'S YOURS!

I HAIL FROM CLEVELAND, TOO! WONDER IF YOU'D KNOW ANY OF MY RELATIONS BACK HOME.

MAYBE. CAN'T BE SURE, THOUGH...'TIL YA TELL ME YER NAME.

SONUVAGUN!

WE NEVER DID EXCHANGE AMENITIES, DID WE?

UH-UH...FOR THE PAST 12 HOURS, YOU'VE BEEN "BOSS" AN' I'VE BEEN "DUCKO."

THE DE-HUMANIZING EFFECT OF NEW YORK!

NO NAMES NECESSARY-- ONLY JOB DESCRIPTIONS! I'M ASHAMED OF MY-SELF--AND GLAD I'M GETTING OUT!

ANYWAY, PAL, THE HANDLE'S SWITZLER-- BEVERLY SWITZLER!

waaaugh

IT'S THE OLD SAW... MOM AND POP WANTED A *GIRL....!*

THEY CALL ME *LEE* FOR SHORT.

SOMETHING *WRONG*, DUCKO? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A *GHOST!*

NAH... IT'S JUST... I KNOW SOMEBODY *ELSE* BY THAT NAME!

MY *NIECE?!*

SHE WAS NAMED AFTER *ME!* ARE YOU A FRIEND OF *BEV'S?* HOW *IS* SHE?

NOT SO HOT...

SHE JUST GOT... *MARRIED.**

*TO THE VILLAINOUS DR. BONG. SEE HTD #19 FOR THE DEPRESSING DETAILS. --S.G.

JEEZ, THAT'S TOO *BAD.* NEVER FIGURED SHE WAS THE *TYPE* TO SETTLE DOWN. AS A *KID*, SHE KINDA TOOK AFTER *ME...!*

THE FREE SPIRIT... ALWAYS TAKING MATTERS INTO HER OWN *HANDS!* USEDTA DRIVE HER FOLKS HALF-CRAZY!

LITTLE MISS *INTUITION*, ALWAYS ACTING ON IMPULSE AND *INSTINCT*, ALWAYS ON THE *MOVE...!*

BEATS *WAITING* FOREVER FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN, THOUGH...!

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YER IN *MOTION* SO MUCH ...YA MIGHT KEEP *PASSIN'* THAT "SOMETHIN'" IN *TRANSIT!*

VERY *CLEVER*, MY FRIEND! NEVER *THOUGHT* OF IT QUITE THAT WAY BEFORE!

SIGH WELL, I'M *OFF!* IF YOU'D CARE TO TAG *ALONG--!*

CAN'T! I'M WAITIN' FOR MY *SHIP* TA COME IN.

THE *S.S. DAMNED*-- I GOT A COUPLE O' *FRIENDS* ABOARD.*

*PAUL SAME AND WINDA WESTER. SEE HTD #15. --S.

IN *THAT* CASE, MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO USE THIS DUMP AS A *NEST* IN THE MEANTIME.

HERE-- TAKE THE *KEYS!* I'M PAID UP FOR ANOTHER MONTH, ANYHOW...!

LISTEN, YA *REALLY* DON'T HAVETA DO THIS, LEE, UH--

'SPECIALLY SINCE IT MAKES ME SEEM *ROTTEN* FOR ASKIN'--

BUT I *DID* PUT IN A FULL DAY OVER YER *SINK*, AN--

AND YOU DESERVE TO BE *PAID!*

NEVER BE EMBARRASSED TO ASK FOR WHAT'S *FAIR*, DUCKO!

LOOK ME UP WHEN YOU HIT *OHIO*, HEAR?

=ULP= A *FIFTY*--?!

WE MAY BE SEEIN' A *LOT* OF EACH OTHER, PAL!

WHEN LEE SWITZLER HAS *GONE*...

AH-H-H! HALF A *C-NOTE* IN POCKET...A ROOF OVER MY *HEAD*...MAYBE THE DRY SPELL IS *OVER*...!

=HA HA= MAYBE THE LONG WINTER O' MY *DISCONTENT* HAS FINALLY GIVEN WAY TA--

WAAUGH!

THPOIING!

--SPRING.

UH...THIS DOES *NOT* BODE WELL.

NOT **WELL**, PERHAPS, BUT **SAGELY.**

ADULT FILTH BOOK

ADULT FILTH BOOK SHOPPE

FOR ALREADY SINISTER EVENTS ARE AFOOT IN THE CITY...AS THE **CUSTODIANS** OF PUBLIC MORALITY TAKE TO THE STREETS.

♪ LA-DE-DA-♪

ADULT FILTH BOOK SHOPPE

BLAM

:AARRGH:

:OHHH:

TH-THIS--SMACKS-- OF :GASP: CEN-- **CENSORSH**--:UNNGH:

PARDON ME, MA'AM, THIS MOVIE--"**ZELDA, NAZI WERE-WOLF**"--

PRETTY **RACY,** ISN'T IT?

:YAWN: YEAH, WELL... IT **TRIES,** I GUESS, BUT...!

SAY NO MORE! ITS AESTHETIC SUCCESS OR FAILURE IS OF NO **CONSEQUENCE!**

BLAM

THE **ATTEMPT** IS ALL THAT COUNTS! :AAGH:

THUS, THE "ADULT FILTH BOOKSTORE" AND THE "CINE LIBIDO" THEATRE CLOSE THEIR DOORS **FOREVER.**

AND THE **REPERCUSSIONS** ARE FELT THE LENGTH OF MANHATTAN ISLAND...EX-CEPT **HERE,** IN THE **CRUSHED CORDU-ROY FORUM,** WHERE THE HEAVY METAL SOUND OF **MILDRED HOROWITZ AND HIS BAND** DROWN THEM OUT.

GO, MILDRED --GO!!

♪ MY MAMA SLEW MY POODLE WHEN I WAS A LAD OF THREE--SHE SERVED THAT FOR DINNER--AN' THAT WAS **RUIN** OF ME--! ♪

ROCK AND **ROLL!**

MILDRED **FINISHES** HIS SET TO A THUNDEROUS OVATION AND STRIDENT SHOUTS OF "ENCORE! **ENCORE!**"

BUT BEFORE HE CAN MOUNT THE STAGE TO **OBLIGE!**"

HI, KIDS!

YEAH, **HI!**

WANNA KNOW WHO **WE** ARE?!

THE ACT IS **UNSCHEDULED**, OF COURSE ... BUT THE AUDIENCE DOESN'T **KNOW** THAT. SO 44,000 HANDS APPLAUD **"YES"**; AND...

WE'RE THE **SOOFI**, FOES OF FILTH-- WE'RE STRAIGHT, UP-RIGHT, AND **MORAL!**

WE'RE BRAVE, WE'RE **TRUE--**

--RED, WHITE, AND **BLUE--**

--BUT **MOST** OF ALL--

--TEMPORAL!

WHUMP

WHUMP

WHUMP

KA-CHOOM!

PLASTIC **EXPLOSIVES** IN THE HEADS OF THE BROOMS... **DETONATED** ON IMPACT WITH THE **FLOORBOARDS...!**

THE CROWD RUNS SCREAMING FROM THE AUDITORIUM AS FRAGMENTS OF GUITARS, AMPS, AND **MILDRED** SHOWER THE ORCHESTRA SECTION.

"AND SO ANOTHER BLOW WAS STRUCK AGAINST **OBSCENITY** BY THESE ODDLY **COMICAL** SUICIDAL WARRIORS--"

--WHO FIND DENIAL OF ***CIVIL RIGHTS*** AND PERSECUTION OF ***INNOCENTS*** PREFERABLE TO THE LEWD CONTENT OF SOME CONTEMPORARY ENTERTAINMENTS.

FRANKLY, THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANNEL EIGHT IS UNSURE ***WHICH*** SIDE TO TAKE IN THIS CONTROVERSY.

SHALL WE ADVOCATE ***SLOW*** DEATH BY HARRASSMENT--***SWIFT*** DEATH BY EXPLOSIVE BROOMS--?

THE STRANGLING OF OUR ***FREEDOMS*** BY CENSORSHIP --OR THE EROSION OF OUR ***MORAL FIBER*** BY PORNOGRAPHY--?

I DUNNO!

THEREFORE WE CALL UPON **PRESIDENT CARTER** TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP--

:YAWN: RIGHT-- WHEN IN DOUBT, GO CRYIN' TA **JIMMY!**

ANYTHIN' TA KEEP FROM THINKIN' FOR **YERSELVES!**

AAAH... I'M PROB'LY BEEIN' TOO **HARSH.**

IT'S **ONLY** THE EIGHT A.M. EDITORIAL--!

MAYBE THEY'LL MAKE UP THEIR MIND IN TIME FOR THE **NIGHTLY NEWS!**

ANYWAY, I'M NOT GONNA LET IT SPOIL MY **BREAKFAST!**

EXCEPT-- **SUDD** MENTIONED SOMETHIN' ABOUT THE SOOFI, TOO--!

WHAT? -- OH, YEAH!-- HE WAS QUITTIN' HIS JOB AS LEE'S **DISHWASHER** TA GO **JOIN** 'EM!

KASAKOVE

SWELL.

SO THEY'RE PROB'LY AFTER **ME,** TOO...!

BUT I'M **STILL** NOT GONNA LET IT SPOIL MY--

GOOD MORNING, DUCK!

YOU'VE WALKED RIGHT INTO A SPRITZ OF SOOFI'S MOST **HUMANE** WEAPON--

--**FORMULA 410!**

IT SAFELY CLEANS PORCELAIN, ENAMEL, GLASS...

:AWP:

...AND ALL **CONSCIOUS-NESS** FROM THE BRAIN!

AN INDETERMINATE TIME LATER, HOWARD BEGINS THE ARDUOUS ASCENT BACK TO SENSIBILITY.

AND THE SENSATION HE EXPERIENCES OF FIRST RUNG IS ONE OF ...CONSTRICTION, OF SOME BINDING TIGHT ABOUT HIS BODY...

...INHIBITING THE EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION OF HIS CHEST, IMPEDING THE MOVEMENT OF BLOOD TO HIS LIMBS...!

AND IT LOOKS AS GOOD AS IT FEELS!

WAAAUGH!

NO!

WHO DID THIS TA ME?!?

THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FER THIS SARTORIAL ABOMINATION MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE...

...NOT LOCKIN' MY CELL.

YA CAN MESS WITH MY MIND-- YA CAN MESS WITH MY BODY--!

BUT NOBODY MEDDLES WITH MY TASTE!

NOBODY COMPROMISES MY DIGNITY

NOBODY DRESSES ME FUNNY AN' LIV--

WAITAMINIT-- WHERE AM I?! NO WINDOWS IN THIS JOINT-- NO CLOCKS!

FOR ALL I KNOW, I MIGHT'A BEEN IN THE OL' VOID FOR HOURS-- EVEN DAYS!

FOR ALL I KNOW, THIS COULD BE SOME MADMAN'S LAIR IN *POUGHKEEPSIE!*

SOOFI DEATH COMMANDO OF THE ALMIG--

WHY YOU SHOULD DIE FOR SOOFI

A SOOFI GUIDE TO GIDDY LIBERATION

I MEAN-- I'M *DRESSED* FOR POUGHKEEPSIE--!

BUT *ONE* THING'S FOR SURE:

NOBODY *FED* ME WHILE I WAS OUT! I'M STAR--

--UH, ON *SECOND* THOUGHT...!

NO TELLIN' WHAT'S *IN* THESE ORANGES BESIDES VITAMIN "C"!

I'D HATE TA TAKE A BIG JUICY BITE O' *FORMULA 410!*

BETTER *PASS* FOR NOW...!

BESIDES, I'M MORE *IRRITABLE* WHEN I'M HUNGRY. I DON'T WANNA LOSE MY JAGGED *EDGE...*

...BEFORE I MEET THE MAD *HABERDASHER!*

AN' THERE'S STILL A FEW TYPICALLY TEDIOUS *MYSTERIES* TA BE DEALTH WITH.

YER BASIC SUSPICIOUS *TARPAULIN,* HERE...!

I PROB'LY OUGHTTA WONDER ABOUT WHAT'S *UNDER--*

WE CALL IT THE *BLANDITRON,* FOWL! IT'S A PATENTED *SOOFI* DEVICE FOR *CEREBRAL ABLUTION!*

DOES IT SWAB THE BRAIN O' *GOOD TASTE,* TOO?

WHAT'S WITH MY NEW *WARDROBE* CITRUS-HEAD?

OH, **THAT!** THAT'S FOR PEORIA! YOU'LL BE HEADING OUR **SWEEP-UP SQUAD** THERE...

...ONCE YOU'VE BEEN **BLANDERIZED!**

THE VERY **NOTION** OF A BARE-BOTTOMED SOOFI IN PEORIA...!

YEAH. HORRENDOUS. BUT WHADDA-YA NEED **ME** FOR?

JUDGIN' BY THE **NEWS** REPORTS, YA GOT A FULL COMPLEMENT OF FANATICS **ALREADY!**

ORDINARY **ZEALOTS** ARE A DIME A DOZEN! I SAW SOME-THING **SPECIAL** IN YOU!

YOUTH APPEAL!

A KIND OF SATURDAY MORNING **WHOLESOMENESS!**

BESIDES, ALL MY **OTHER** COMMANDOS ARE **DEAD!**

SOOFI ASKS THE **SUPREME** SACRIFICE! THERE'S A **WAR** ON, YOU KNOW!

I **DO**--?

YA MUST HAVE PROBLEMS **RECRUITIN'!**

IT'S **SEASONAL**-- PEOPLE ARE LESS SELF-DESTRUC-TIVE IN THE **SUMMER** MONTHS--BUT WE HAVE A BRISK TURNOVER AROUND **CHRISTMAS**--!

I HAVE **DEMO-GRAPHICS** IF YOU'RE INTERESTED...!

NAH... THAT'S OKAY...!

ONLY... YA MEAN TA TELL ME, NONE O' YER KAMIKAZES FOR DECENCY ASKED... WHY **YOU'RE** STILL ALIVE??

WELL, OF COURSE, WE **SCREEN OUT** ALL THE TROUBLE-MAKERS...!

AND THE REST AREN'T INCLINED TO **QUESTION** THE NEED FOR A **CONTINUITY** OF LEADERSHIP.

IT'S ALL **SHOW BIZ,** DUCK-- A SWEET SMILE, A SONG, A NOD TO GOD AND COUNTRY...

...AND **SOME** PEOPLE WILL FOLLOW YOU **ANYWHERE!**

EVEN INTO THE ***BLANDITRON!***

BUT, PLEASE-- DON'T THINK ME ***CYNICAL!***

YOU?? ***NAH...!***

"CYNICAL" DOESN'T COME ***CLOSE!***

I MEAN, I ***BELIEVE*** IN THE JUSTNESS OF THE SOOFI CAUSE! THE IDEA OF THE BLANDITRON CAME TO ME IN-- A ***VISION!***

THE ***ALMIGHTY*** APPEARED TO ME ON ***MIAMI BEACH!***

UH-HUH--!

...AND INSTRUCTED ME TO CARRY THE PREVAILING COMMUNITY STANDARDS OF ***DADE COUNTY*** TO THE WHOLE ***WORLD!***

:HEH:

GREAT ***KIDDER,*** THAT GUY--!

:ULP:

"DECENCY ISN'T JUST FOR ***BREAKFAST*** ANY-MORE," HE SAID!

HE SAID THAT??

YES! AND THEN HANDED ME THE SCHEMATICS FOR THE ***BLANDITRON!***

WOULD ***YOU*** QUESTION THE LORD'S GOOD JUDGMENT, FOWL?

UH-UH-- ***'SPECIALLY*** IF HE SUED YA FOR ***SLANDER!***

VERY WELL, CRAVEN CANARD-- **MOCK** ME WHILE YOU **MAY!** GET IT OUT OF YOUR **SYSTEM!**

IT'LL MAKE THE BLANDITRON'S JOB THAT MUCH **EASIER!**

AW, LOOK--CAN'T WE TALK THIS **OVER?** MAYBE WE CAN MAKE A--**TRADE!**

TRADE?

I'LL SIGN UP FOR A TOUR O' DUTY IN **PEORIA...**

...IF YOU'LL LEMME RETAIN MY ASCERBIC **WIT** AN' RUGGED GOOD **LOOKS!**

BZZT!

NEVER! WIT IS INIMICAL TO THE SOOFI CREED!

LET'S SEE ...WE'LL SET THE MACHINE ON "**FULL LOAD**", WHICH YOU ARE...AND **PERMANENT PRESS.**

"YOU'LL GET THE **TOTAL TREATMENT...**

"...AND YOUR **MIND** WILL BE CREASED **FOREVER!**"

PING!

YOU'LL EMERGE A DYED-IN-THE DOWN **SOOFI**--AND **LOVING** IT!

THERE, NOW--WAS THAT SO BAD?

YOU'VE BEEN REBORN, DUCK! REJOICE--AND COME OUT SMILING!

CHUKK

SHOULD'A USE A PRE-SOAK, CHUM.

I'M THE SAME DUCK I ALWAYS WAS--'CEPT MAYBE NASTIER!

B-BUT...I CAN'T HAVE FAILED... NOT WITH HIM ON MY SIDE...!

HOLY CRUD..YOU'RE A FEMALE HAIR-LESS APE...AN' I KNOW THAT FACE BUT...!

AND WHAT'S A GIRL FROM THE SUNSHINE STATE DOING IN THE TRENCHES...?

SKIP IT, SWEETS! I'D RATHER NOT--

NO!! DON'T GO! PLEASE! I NEED YOU!

A DAY WITHOUT IMPOSING MY MORALITY ON SOMEONE ELSE--

--IS LIKE A DAY WITHOUT-- WELL, YOU KNOW!

IN THAT CASE, HON, YOU JUST KEEP ON TRYIN'--

--AN' I'LL JUST KEEP ON RESISTIN'--

--AN' WE'LL BOTH HAVE A LOTTA CLOUDY DAYS AHEAD.

;waaaugh÷

NEXT: MAN-THING!. KORREK! JENNIFER! DAKIMH! IN THE WEIRDEST REUNION OF ALL TIME--AND SPACE!

"MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU!"

HOWARD THE DUCK™

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

BEGINNING! A DUCK TALE THAT SPANS THE GALAXY--AND STILL GOES NOWHERE!

NOW! HOWARD AND THE MAN-THING--REUNITED AT LAST!

MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER / VAL MAYERIK ARTIST / WILLIAM WRAY INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, letterer JANICE COHEN, colorist

MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU!

FROM THE ROOFTOP OF LEE SWITZLER'S * NEW YORK APARTMENT HOUSE, A WEARY WATERFOWL RASPS HIS RANCOR AT THE COSMOS.

SO BEVERLY'S *MARRIED* TA DR. BONG... PAUL AN WINDA ARE STILL AT *SEA*...

...AN' HERE I *SIT*, THIRTY-SEVEN BUCKS TA MY *NAME*...

...UNDER SMOG SO *THICK* I CAN'T EVEN FIND A STAR TA *WISH* ON!

NOT THAT I *BELIEVE* IN WISHES COMIN' TRUE--!

:grrr:

* BEVERLY'S UNCLE. SEE LAST ISH. --S.G.

NOPE, NOT IN *THIS* MULTIVERSE...!

WISHIN' *CAN'T* TAKE THE PLACE O' PERSISTENCE, HARD WORK...

:grrr:

SALT

KENT

...DILIGENCE, TENACITY, GUTS, BRAINS, AN' A TOTAL ABNEGATION O' *SCRUPLES!*

OH, YEAH--AN' A GOOD *LAWYER.*

:SIGH: MAYBE I OUGHTTA GET A JOB WRITIN' *CHILDREN'S BOOKS...!*

SALT

:grrr:

"GRR"--?

:GRRR:

SALT

:waaaugh:

KENT STATE

"WAAAUGH"--?

SALT

GRRR!

KENT STATE

LISTEN, IT'S BEEN GREAT SWAPPIN' *INTER-JECTIONS* WITH YA, BUT I GOTTA RUN--!

I WILL *NOT* CONTEMPLATE THE *ABSURDITY* OF THIS CREATURE ...I WILL ASK *NO* QUESTIONS...!

WHATEVER IT *IS*-- I ONLY WANT *ONE THING* FROM IT:

AWAY.

BUT THE FOWL IS DENIED EVEN THAT. THE APE-SHAKER BEAST FORCES HOWARD TO THE GROUND...

HA

AHA

...AND SEASONS HIM LIBERALLY.

IMMOBILIZED UNDER HIS OWN WEIGHT IN SALT, THE DUCK WATCHES DUMBFOUNDED AS HIS ASSAILANT FORGETS ALL ABOUT HIM...

...HOPS UP ON THE PARAPET...

SALT

...AND COMMITS SUICIDE.

EEEAAA

THERE'S GOTTA BE MORE HERE THAN MEETS THE EYE--!

WHAT SCARES ME IS-- MAYBE THERE ISN'T!

I MEAN...THE IDEA O' BEIN' ATTACKED BY A GIANT SALT-SHAKER WITH SIMIAN LIMBS, FOR NO REASON...!

NOW THAT'S TERRIFY-ING!

SO I'M HOPIN' I CAN CHALK THIS UP TA DR. BONG OR SOMEBODY... AN' IT WASN'T REALLY A SALT-SHAKER...

...AND IT DIDN'T REALLY DIE...

...AN' SO MUCH FOR THAT THEORY.

AT LEAST I KNOW I DIDN'T IMAGINE IT... THOSE HAIRLESS APES ON THE STREET SAW IT, TOO...

...UNLESS I ALSO IMAGINED THEM!

BUT--THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE ANOTHER BOUT WITH DEMENTIA.

IT FEELS WORSE-- AN' SORTA NAUSEATINGLY FAMILIAR.

IF I COULD JUST REMEMBER WHEN I FELT LIKE THIS BEFORE, I--

BUT THE MEMORY REMAINS DORMANT, FOR SUDDENLY--

=WAAAUGH=

BZZZZZ

A HOUSEFLY-- AS BIG AS A HOUSE!!

--THE ASSAULT ON HOWARD'S SENSIBILITIES RESUMES!

BZZZ

WHERE ARE THE MEN O' S.W.A.T. WHEN YA NEED 'EM?!

AN' WHY AM I MAKIN' DUMB JOKES AT A TIME LIKE THIS?!

BZZZZZZZ

IF THAT MONSTROSITY LIGHTS ON ME--

--AN' IT LOOKS LIKE IT WANTS TO--

--I'LL BE CRUSHED TO A PULP!

GUESS I'M GONNA HAVETA OWE SOMEBODY A GUITAR!

HAH! STOPPED 'IM COLD--WITH THE OPENIN' CHORD OF "HARD DAY'S NIGHT!"

BZ-'OIIIPP

WHAK WHAK WHAK WHAK WHAK

--AN' THAT'S FINAL!

TREMBLING, THE DUCK SIDLES TOWARD THE ENCLOSED STAIRWAY... AND HOPEFULLY, SAFETY. HE RECALLS NOW, WITH FRIGHTFUL CLARITY, THE LAST TIME HE EXPERIENCED THIS SINGULAR QUEASINESS... AND THE MEMORY FILLS HIM WITH NO SLIGHT DREAD.

IT WAS JUST BEFORE THE DEFINITIVE "BIG EVENT"--

--THE INSTANT I BLINKED OUTTA MY WORLD--

--AN' INTA THIS COCKEYED--

AWP

AW, NO! IT CAN'T BE--!!

YOUR EYES DO NOT DECEIVE YOU, HOWARD THE DUCK...!

B-BUT-- BUT--!

IT IS I--DAKIMH THE ENCHANTER--OR, RATHER, HIS GHOST--YOU SEE, I AM NOW TECHNICALLY DECEASED, BUT NO MATTER--!

AND BESIDE ME STANDS THE MACABRE MAN-OBJECT!

I TRUST YOU DO REMEMBER OUR LAST MEETING.*

Y-YEAH-- SURE-- BUT--!

* WAY BACK IN MAN-THING #1, --STEVE.

THE TIME HAS COME, HOWARD THE DUCK, TO FULFILL THE ROLE DESTINY CHOSE FOR YOU AT THAT TIME.

YOU AND YOUR FORMER COMPATRIOTS MUST NOW BE REUNITED--

--TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE!!

THUS-- AWA-A-AY WE GO!

NO! WAIT--!!

BUT IT'S TOO LATE--EVEN AS HOWARD SPEAKS.

WITH BUT A CASUAL TWITCH OF THE **WRIST** (WHICH ADMITTEDLY REQUIRED **CENTURIES** TO MASTER)...

...THE SPIRIT-WIZARD TRANSPORTS HIMSELF, THE DUCK, AND THE SLIME-CRAWLER FROM THAT GLOOMY GOTHAM ROOFTOP TO THE EERIE **LAND BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY!**

THERE, AT THE FOOT OF THE **LIGHT BRIDGE** OF DAKIMH'S **CASTLE IN THE SKY**, THE TRIO IS JOINED BY **KORREK THE BARBARIAN**, WARRIOR PRINCE OF KATHARTA, AND **JENNIFER KALE**, FORMERLY OF CITRUSVILLE, FLORIDA.

ZOKK!! THE SORCERER SPOKE **TRUE!** THE FOWL **LIVES--!!**

HOWARD, IT'S SO **GOOD** TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

YEAH-- IT'S MARVY.

BY BHARPH'S BLOOD--WE THOUGHT YOU HAD *PERISHED* AFTER YOUR PLUNGE INTO *NETHER-SPACE!* *

NAH--I GOT *UN-LUCKY*--AN' LANDED IN *CLEVELAND!*

*AGAIN, MAN-THING #1, --S.

NOW SET ME DOWN--*GENTLY,* YA MUSCLE-BOUND BABBOON--OR I'LL SNAP YER *NOSE* OFF!

*STUNG AND UNCOMPREHENDING, THE BRAWNY BARBARIAN **RELAXES** HIS GRIP AND LETS HOWARD DROP SOFTLY TO THE SAND.*

I--DO NOT *UNDERSTAND,* FRIEND DUCK--!

'TWAS MERELY A GESTURE OF GOOD *FELLOW-SHIP!*

WE THOUGHT *YOU'D* BE AS HAPPY ABOUT THIS GET-TOGETHER AS *WE* ARE--OR *WERE.*

YEAH, WELL... I *MIGHT 'A* BEEN... IF WE'D MET OVER A *BEER* AT THE CORNER *BAR* OR SOMETHIN'--!

BUT THESE COME-AS-YOU-ARE-SAVE-THE-UNIVERSE PARTIES ARE A *DRAG,* SISTER!!

DIDJA EVER STOP TA THINK I MIGHT NOT *WANNA* SAVE THE UNIVERSE?!

WHAT'S THE UNIVERSE EVER DONE FOR *ME,* HUH?!

OR *YOU* EITHER, SLIME-CAKES?!

ANSWER ME *THAT!*

YA *CAN'T,* CAN YA?!

*NO, INDEED. FOR THE MIRY **MAN-THING** LACKS BOTH **VOCAL** APPARATUS AND THE INTELLECTUAL **COHERENCY** TO FATHOM VERBAL COMMUNICATION.*

*HE FUNCTIONS NOT ON **REASON,** BUT RATHER AN **EMPATHIC NATURE.***

HE FEELS WHAT OTHERS FEEL! AND THOUGH THE DUCK'S WORDS REACH HIM AS JUST SO MUCH NOISE... HE UNDERSTANDS HOWARD'S HOSTILITY ON AN INSTINCTUAL LEVEL.

AND HE FINDS IT... DEEPLY DIS-TURBING.

UH...DAKIMH... CALL 'IM OFF.

ALAS, HOWARD, I CANNOT. YOU SEEM TO HAVE WROUGHT HAVOC UPON HIS EMOTIONAL BALANCE.

YOU'LL SIMPLY HAVE TO UNWIND --STRIVE TO REGAIN YOUR COMPO-SURE.

:ULP:

ABOVE ALL, YOU MUST NOT FEEL FEAR--!

FEAR, YOU MAY RECALL, IS THE SINGLE EMOTION THE MAN-OBJECT LOATHES!

R-RIGHT... NO FEAR... NOT A SMIDGEN...

WE'RE BUDDIES, HUH, BIG FELLA--?

FELLOW PEDES-TRIANS IN LIFE'S TWISTED CROSSWALK, RIGHT?

:HEH:

EXCELLENT, HOWARD. HIS EQUILIBRIUM SEEMS TO HAVE RETURNED.

Y-YEAH...

:WHEW:

KENT STATE

NOW LET US SEE IF YOU CAN MAINTAIN YOUR NEWFOUND PLACIDITY IN THE FACE OF THIS SAD TRUTH:

EITHER YOU ALLY YOURSELF WITH OUR CAUSE, HOWARD... OR YOU BUY THE FARM.

YOU WERE ALREADY UNDER ATTACK BY THE ENTITY WE OPPOSE WHEN THE MAN-OBJECT AND I LOCATED YOU.

HE KNOWS OF YOUR SPECIAL DESTINY, DUCK...

...AND HE SHAN'T REST, I ASSURE YOU, WHILE YOU STILL BREATHE.

SHORTLY, WITHIN THE CASTLE'S ANCIENT WALLS...

LISTEN, IT'S THRILLING TA KNOW HE CARES--

--BUT WHO IS HE?!

AYE, SORCERER, YOU'VE NOT TOLD US THAT--NOR AFFORDED ANY HINT AS TO HIS MOTIVES.

BECAUSE HE HAS NONE, KORREK. HE IS BZZK'JOH, SON OF SOMBRA!

FOR HIM, THAT IS REASON ENOUGH-- FOR ANYTHING.

YOU SHALL UNDERSTAND MORE WHEN YOU GLIMPSE WHAT WAITS BEHIND YON DOOR OF STONE.

ALAS, BEING DEAD, I NO LONGER POSSESS THE MIGHT TO MOVE ITS PONDEROUS WEIGHT.

BUT ONE AMONG YOU--

ASIDE THEN, MAGICIAN! NO NEED FOR ELABORATE APOLOGIES. I'LL GLADLY--

NO, KORREK--I THINK HE MEANS ME! IT'S A TEST OF THE MYSTICAL MIGHT I'VE ACQUIRED IN APPRENTICESHIP TO DAKIMH.

YOU SEE... I'VE NEVER SET FOOT IN THIS CHAMBER BEFORE, EITHER. AND I HAVE TO EARN THE PRIVILEGE.

HERE GOES NOTHING--!

SO SAYING, JENNIFER GIVES THE MASSIVE IRON RING A GENTLE TUG, AND...!

THE STONE-- VANISHED!!

AS IS ITS NATURE--

KENT STATE

--AT THE TOUCH OF A LIVING SORCERER!

NOW ENTER -- AND BEHOLD THE WATERS OF ETERNITY!

HERE ARE CAST THE REFLECTIONS OF EVENTS ON A BILLION BILLION WORLDS!

THAT WHICH IS PAST -- THAT WHICH MAY BE -- ALL CAN BE VIEWED IN THE POOL'S PELLUCID DEPTHS!

AND, TOO, THESE WATERS SHALL BE YOUR PORTAL TO THE VERY CENTER OF REALITY!

TOGETHER, YOU SHALL PLUNGE INTO THE STREAM OF BEING TO --

WHUP! HOLD IT! WHOA!! POINT OF ORDER! I DEMAND TA KNOW:

(A) WHERE YOU'RE PLANNIN' TA SHIP US --

(B) WHY --

--AN' (C) IF YOU'RE AWARE I CAN'T SWIM!!

:SIGH: YOU TRY AN OLD MAN'S PATIENCE, FOWL --!

FWASH!

I'M PROBABLY TURNING OVER IN MY GRAVE FOR EVER HAVING ENLISTED YOU IN THIS QUEST --!

I WAS DRAFTED, WHISKERS!

I DIDN'T ENLIST!

WHATEVER. COME GAZE WITH ME INTO THE WATERS -- AND ALL SHALL BE REVEALED.

"THE FIERY LANDSCAPE YOU SEE IN THE WATERS IS A WORLD CALLED MEGRIM--

"--AND THE WOMAN, SOMBRA, ITS IMMORTAL QUEEN.

"EVERY MILLENIUM OR TWO, DEPENDENT UPON HER BIOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS--

"SOMBRA ABDUCTS THE MOST SAVAGE OF WARRIORS FROM THEIR HOMEWORLDS AND BRINGS THEM HERE TO ENGAGE IN A TOURNA-MENT OF SORTS.

"THEY BATTLE UNTIL ONLY ONE IS LEFT ALIVE.

"AND THAT LONE SURVIVOR--

"BECAUSE SOMBRA IS A DEMON LOVER.

"--DRAINING HER MATE OF HIS VERY PSYCHIC-BEING. FROM THIS FUSION, THIS HIDEOUS AND DEADLY UNION, INVARIABLY ISSUES A CHILD SUFFUSED WITH POWER BEYOND MEASURE!

"--THE MOST WANTON OF THE LOT--

"--BECOMES SOMBRA'S MATE.

"HER SOFT EMBRACE SLAYS--

"AND SOMBRA LOOSES THAT CHILD ON THE UNIVERSE!"

ONCE MATURED, SOMBRA'S OFFSPRING CAN BE **HALTED** ONLY BY AN **EQUALLY POWERFUL** FORCE DEDICATED TO **JOY--!**

JOY?! YOU MEAN, THIS **ISN'T** THE CLASSIC CONFRONTATION OF GOOD AND EVIL?

SURELY YA DON'T FIGURE **THIS** MOTLEY BUNCH--!

KENT STATE

PLEASE--LET ME **CONTINUE:**

"YOU SEE, SOMBRA'S NATURE IS NOT PRECISELY EVIL. A MORE **APT** DESCRIPTION MIGHT BE... 'HUMORLESS.'

"HER OFFSPRING HAS HISTORICALLY TENDED LESS TO **VIOLENCE** THAN TO **SPIRITUAL ANESTHESIA.**

"BUT THIS MILLENIUM, SOMETHING WENT **AWRY.**

"**THIS** TIME, THE LONE WARRIOR TO SURVIVE THE TOURNAMENT DID SO **SOLELY** BECAUSE HE WAS TOO **INSANE** TO STOP FIGHTING EVEN THOUGH HE'D BEEN HACKED AND STABBED WITHIN AN INCH OF HIS **LIFE!**

WUG!

"THIS LUNATIC GLADIATOR **WANTED** HER! AND WHEN SHE **INFORMED** HIM THAT THEIR MATING WOULD RESULT IN HIS **DEMISE--**

WUG! WUG!!!

"SOMBRA REALIZED HER GHASTLY ERROR **TOO LATE.**

"--HE WANTED HER ALL THE **MORE.**

WUG?!?

"NO WORDS WOULD DISSUADE HIM. SOMBRA **SHRUGGED.** THE MADMAN DIED **HAPPY...**

"AND SOMBRA BORE HIS **CHILD!**"

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS MAKES YOUR TASK PECULIARLY DIFFICULT, FOR **BZZK'JOH**, AS THE CHILD WAS NAMED, HAS INHERITED BOTH HIS MOTHER'S **DEPRESSIVE** TENDENCIES--AND THE FATHER'S **MADNESS**.

NEVERTHELESS, YOU MUST **FIND** BZZK'JOH AND **NEUTRALIZE** HIM--BEFORE HE **SPREADS**.

BUT, **HOW**--?

YOU MUST MAKE CONTACT WITH--THE **FARCE**--

--THE BINDING ENERGY OF THE **UNIVERSE**--

HAH...?

--WHICH PERMITS ME TO **YOK IT UP** IN THE FACE OF **DEATH**!

SEEK IT WITHIN **YOURSELVES**!

THE **DUCK** SHALL LEAD YOU!

FAREWEL-L-L-L-L-L--

THE **FOWL**--OUR **GENERAL**?!

ZOKK AND MAFTRA--**NO**!!

MAGE--COME BACK!!

HE **CAN'T** KORREK! HIS TIME IN THE MATERIAL WORLD IS STRICTLY **LIMITED**!

IF HE DOESN'T RETURN TO **THEREA**--THE PLANE OF SPIRITS--HIS **SOUL** DIES!

YEAH, WELL, IF **BLONDIE** HERE WANTS TA LEAD THE TROOPS--

--IT'S **OKAY** BY ME! JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TA **FOLLOW**!

NOTHIN' **PERSONAL**, KORREK!

I'M **SITTIN' OUT** THIS HOLOCAUST.

LEAVING HIS SPEECH-LESS COM-PATRIOTS BEHIND...

...HOWARD RETREATS TO THE CASTLE BATTLE-MENTS, SEEKING FRESH AIR AND A FRESH APPROACH.

THE "FARCE"--WHAT A CROCK!

MEGRIM--SOMBRA--BERSERK JOE*--HORSE APPLES!!

AN' EVEN IF IT'S TRUE--AN' THE UNIVERSE CRUMBLES--

*HOWARD PRONUNCIATION OF "BZZK' JOH."--S.G.

--SO WHAT?! WHO'D NOTICE??

EH...?

OH, IT'S YOU!

WHAT'S ON YER MIND? DID THEY SEND YA UP HERE TA DUKE IT OUT WITH ME, HUH--?

OR DIDJA DECIDE YOU WERE A CON-SCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR, TOO?

NO COMMENT, HUH?

WELL, LEMME TELL YA--THERE'S ENOUGH OBJECTION-ABLE ABOUT THIS GIG TA MAKE A DOVE OUTTA JOHN WAYNE!

I MEAN... DAKIMH ASSUMES WE'VE GOT A VESTED INTER-EST IN PRESERVIN' THE UNIVERSE--,

WELL, I'M NOT SO SURE!

AN' IF THAT'S TRUE FOR ME, SLIME-CAKES--WHAT ABOUT YOU?!

OF ALL THE RAW DEALS FROM HERE TO ETERNITY, YOU GOT THE BLUE PLATE SPECIAL!

YOU USED TA BE A HAIRLESS APE--AN' THEY ACTUALLY FOUND A WAY TA MAKE YA UGLIER!

SO WHAT'S THE SCOOP, HUH, PAL? WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?! WHY SHOULD WE STICK OUR NECKS OUT FOR THE SELFSAME DESTINY THAT SCREWED UP BOTH OUR LIVES--?!

ANSWER: WE *SHOULDN'T!*

AN' NOW THAT *THAT'S* SETTLED-- I'M *STARVIN'!*

WONDER IF WHISKERS KEEPS ANY *EATS* AROUND THIS PLACE--?

LET'S CHECK IT OUT!

DOWNSTAIRS...

GET A *LOAD* O' THIS, WILLYA--!

DAKIMH CONJURED HIMSELF UP A *ALL-ELECTRIC KITCHEN!*

WHAT SAY WE *RAID* THE REFRIGER-ATOR?

MORE TO THE POINT, WHAT DO YOU SAY...

KO-CHUR!!

...WHEN THE REFRIGER-ATOR RAIDS YOU??

DI-UHL!

IT'S A PICKLE, NO DENYING THAT... GREEN AND BUMPY WITH A SLIGHT ODOR OF VINEGAR...

...AND THE TEMPER-AMENT OF EVEL KNIEVEL.

:WAAUGH: DON'T JUST *SLOUCH* THERE, MUCK-FACE--!

HELP!!

SENSING THE DUCK'S DISTRESS, THE SLOUGH-BEAST HAULS HIS MISSHAPEN FORM CLOSER...!

SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, THE MIRY MONSTER ACCOM-PLISHES THE ARDU-OUS TASK OF LIFTING HIS ARM OVER HIS HEAD.

WHUNT

AND THEN...

HE LETS IT DROP... TO STUNNING EFFECT.

BUT THE CRAZED CUKE-SPAWN CHARGES BACK TO THE FRAY...

DO-MOW-RY!

...FLAILING AT THE SWAMP CREATURE WITH SAVAGE, SEED-LADEN FISTS!

MAN-THING, HOWEVER, IS IMMUNE TO THIS SORT OF ATTACK.

OGO-REK?!

AND IN THE PROCESS, ITS MAD FRENZY PERMEATES THE MURK-DWELLER'S EMPATHIC NATURE, DRIVING HIM WILD!

ZWEEEET!

THE PICKLE SINKS UP TO ITS ELBOWS IN THE MONSTER'S OOZING SUBSTANCE.

CHUNKS OF GREEN, TORN FROM THE PICKLE'S FORM BY MAN-THING'S CLAWLIKE HANDS, SPATTER THE WALLS.

REHL--

AND WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR-- BURNS AT MAN-THING'S TOUCH!

--LIIISSH!

THE PICKLE SHUDDERS, IN AGONY... AND IN FEAR!

PHEW! I'M ABOUT TA TOSS COOKIES AN' I HAVEN'T EVEN *EATEN* YET--!!

FOR SHEER *DISGUST*, THE ONLY THING THAT TOPS THE SMELL O' *BURNIN' PICKLE*--

--IS THE *CONCEPT* ITSELF!

EEEEEEEK

UH-OH.

I MAY *YET* LIVE TA *RETRACT* THAT STATE-MENT.

FROM THE *SOUND* OF IT--

--THERE'S SOMETHIN' EVEN *MORE* REVOLTIN' DOWNSTAIRS!

SO THERE IS--RISING UP ON A GEYSER FROM THE DEPTHS OF ETERNITY!

AND ITS NAME IS--BZZK 'JOH!!

WUG!!

THIS CHICKEE IS HEREBY DECLARED A *PRISONER* OF THE *IMPERIUM EMPORIUM!*

ANY ATTEMPT TO *RESCUE* THIS CHICKEE SHALL RESULT IN HER INSTANTANEOUS *BALDNESS!*

ZOKK--!!

SH-H-H! NASTY WORDSIES ARE NOT *ALLOWED* IN THIS CHICKEE'S PRESCENCE--

--OR *MY* MIXED COMPANY, EITHER!

WUG!!

NEXT...

ROBOTS!! STARSHIPS!! CANTINAS!! HAMBURGERS, HAIR-DRYERS, HOT WHEELS, HEROICS, DERRING-DO'S-AND-DON'TS!! ALL THIS AND THE HEAVENS, TOO, IN--

STAR WAAUGH!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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BANG

PLEASE DONT LITTER

COLAN WEISS '77

RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE IN A GALAXY TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT...

STAR WAAUGH!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

BEHOLD-- THE CASTLE IN THE SKY, O'ER THE **LAND BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY!**

THE EN-CHANTER **DAKIMH** SUMMONED HOWARD THE DUCK, **KORREK** THE BARBARIAN, **MAN-THING** THE SWAMP CREATURE, AND **JENNIFER** THE IN-GENUE HERE TO UNITE THEIR QUESTIONABLE MIGHT AGAINST THE TYRANNY OF **BZZK'JOH*** AND HIS **IMPERIUM EMPORIUM.**

"MAKE CONTACT WITH THE **FARCE,**" DAKIMH INSTRUCTED, "THE BINDING ENERGY OF THE UNIVERSE WHICH PERMITS MEN TO **YOK IT UP** IN THE FACE OF DEATH! FIND BZZK'JOH AND **NEUTRALIZE** HIM-- BEFORE HE **SPREADS.**"

BUT BZZK'JOH STRUCK **FIRST...!**

STAR WAAUGH

STEVE GERBER ☆ VAL MAYERICK — I. WATANABE, LETTERER
WRITER/EDITOR — ARTIST — J. COHEN, COLORIST

*PRONOUNCED: "BERSERK JOE."--STEVE.

IN THE CASTLE'S **SUB-CELLAR,** THE DEMENTED DEMI-GOD SNEERS, SHAKES HIS FIST, AND CROSSES HIS **EYES**...PARTLY IN **DEFIANCE** OF ALL THAT IS **SANE,** PARTLY OUT OF **HABIT.**

I **REPEAT**-- ANY ATTEMPT TO **THWART** MY WARTS--

--SHALL RESULT IN THIS CHICKEE'S INSTANTANEOUS **BALDNESS!**

EVEN AS I SPEAK AND YOU LISTEN, MY IMPERIUM EMPORIUM IS BUYING UP **PROPERTY** ALL OVER THE **GALAXY,** IN EVERY **DIMENSION!**

WITHIN HOURS, AS **BEES** RECKON TIME, WE SHALL **BULLDOZE THE UNIVERSE** AND BUILD ON ITS RUINS--

--A **SHOP-PING CENTER** UNRIVALLED IN ITS **CRASSNESS!**

:HA HA: **WUG!!**

WITH THAT, THE LUNATIC SPAWN OF **SOMBRA** SINKS BACK INTO THE **POOL OF INFINITY...**

ZOKK AND **MAFTRA!!**

PLEASE DON'T LITTER

...BUT NOT BE-FORE **JENNIFER** GETS IN A **PART-ING SHOT.**

WHY DID THE EN-CHANTER'S APPRENTICE LOOSE HER MYSTIC BOLT AT **US?**

IS THE FIEND'S MADNESS **INFECTIOUS??**

I DUNNO ...BUT LET'S PLAY IT **SAFE...**

--AN' NOT DRINK THE **WATER.**

I THIRST ONLY FOR **BATTLE**, FOWL!

LET US PLUNGE AFTER THE **SCOUNDREL**--INTO THIS POOL WHICH DAKIMH CALLED THE **GATEWAY** TO ALL **WORLDS!**

NAH.

YOU GO AHEAD.

YOUR RELUCTANCE **APPALLS** ME, DUCK! THERE ARE WORLDS TO BE WON-- A **PROPHECY** TO FULF--

:UNNGH:

WHNK!

BHARPH'S BLOOD! THE DEMON HAS FROZEN **SOLID** THE WATERS OF INFINITY!!

WH-WHAT CAN IT **MEAN**--?!

FOR **ONE** THING-- THAT YA SHOULD'A **LOOKED** BEFORE YA **PLUNGED**-- BONEHEAD.

AN ACCURATE-- BUT **INCOMPLETE** --ANALYSIS, SIR.

HUH-- WHO--?

I **AM** SORRY, SIR.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO **STARTLE** YOU. MY DESIGNATION IS **NAAC-P30**, A DRUID-DROID, THE MAGICAL EQUIVALENT OF A **ROBOT**.

AND THIS IS 2-2-2-2, OR **TUTU** FOR SHORT-- MY COMPLEMENTARY UNIT.

THE YOUNG LADY **ACTIVATED** US WITH HER MYSTIC BOLT.

PLEASE DON'T LITTER

SHE SENSED, I BELIEVE, THAT WITH THE INFINITY POOL **:HEH:** BARRED TO **BATHERS**, YOU WOULD REQUIRE A **GUIDE** IN YOUR QUEST ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS.

AND **YOU** ARE EQUIPPED TO CONDUCT US, GOLDEN ONE?

BURP

OH, **FULLY**, SIR. THERE'S MORE THAN **ONE** WAY TO SKIN A DIMENSIONAL GULF, I ALWAYS SAY.

PLEASE FOLLOW **ME**.

I THOUGHT I'D MADE MY POSITION **CLEAR**, BLONDIE.

STILL YOU REFUSE TO LEND YOUR THEWS TO THE **TASK** WHICH DESTINY HAS SET FOR US?!

YEAH-- **STILL!**

I MAKE IT A POINT **NEVER** TA LOAN OUT MY THEWS!

THEY ALWAYS COME BACK **DAMAGED!**

SO-- IT'S **COWARDICE** THAT RE-STRAINS YOU, IS IT?

THEN KNOW THAT YOU'VE AS MUCH TO FEAR FROM **KORREK OF KATHARTA** AS FROM OUR COMMON **FOE!**

DEFEND YOURSELF, FEATHERED ONE-- LEST I **SLAY** YOU WHERE YOU **STAND!**

YER SAVAGE **BUTTERKNIFE** DOESN'T STAND A **CHANCE** AGAINST THIS SOUPED-UP **SHOTGUN** DAKIMH LEFT FOR ME!

SO YOU AN' YER **THEWS** GET OUTTA MY **LIFE**, OR SO HELP ME, I'LL--

BANG

POP!

AWW-- **STUFF IT**, KORREK!

OBOY.

HAH! YOUR VAUNTED **FIRE-STICK** IS BUT A **TOY** --AND YOUR **FATE** TOTTERS ON THE TIP OF MY **BLADE!**

CHOOSE, FOWL --THE GLORY OF THE **QUEST**--

--OR **DEATH** BY MY HAND!?

GLORY! **GLORY!** HALLELUJAH!

;waaugh;

SATISFIED, THE WARRIOR PRINCE OF THE WESTLANDS **SHEATHES** HIS FIERY SWORD...

...AND GIVES **NAAC-P30** THE NOD TO **LEAD ON.**

DON'T LOOK SO **DOWNHEARTED,** MASTER DUCK.

PLEASE TO

THE RIFLE **IS** A REAL WEAPON, YOU KNOW.

BUT YOU MUST LEARN HOW TO USE IT IN **COMMUNION** WITH THE **FARCE.**

MEANWHILE, I SUGGEST WE HOP ABOARD THE **"EPOCH WEASEL"** HERE--

--AND COMMENCE OUR **VOYAGE** ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS.

IN **THAT** CRATE?!

OH, NO! THIS IS WHERE I DRAW THE **LINE!**

I ASSURE YOU, SIR, IT'S MOST **SPACEWORTHY.** DAKIMH WAS ITS **ORIGINAL OWNER.** IT'S STILL UNDER **WARRANTY.**

DUCK...?

OKAY, OKAY...!

YOU HAVE MY **WORD** --AND THAT OF **ATLANTIS R.V. SALES.**

MEEP

YOU **SAID** IT--!

I PRESUME YOU POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE TO **OPERATE** THIS STRANGE CRAFT, DROID...!

NATURALLY, SIR... A **MORON** COULD DO IT.

PERHAPS **YOU'D** CARE TO **CO-PILOT...?**

VERY WELL.

WONDERFUL! NOW, TO START HER UP, WE NEED ONLY PRESS THIS **BUTTON...**

...MARKED "BAT OUT OF HELL."

THUSLY--!

REMARKABLY **RESPONSIVE,** DON'T YOU AGREE-- FOR A CRAFT THAT'S SAT IN THE **GARAGE** FOR THE BETTER PART OF **20,000 YEARS?**

÷waaugh÷

COUGHING, CHOKING, THE ANCIENT RECREATIONAL VEHICLE **LURCHES** OUT OF ITS DOORLESS HANGAR...

...AND INTO THE FRIENDLY SKIES ABOVE THE LAND BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY!

YOU **SEE?** HANDLES LIKE A **DREAM!**

SHE'LL GET US TO THE CENTER OF THE **UNIVERSE,** ALL RIGHT--

--TO BZZK' JOH'S VERY **DOORSTEP.**

I *PREFER* A STEED OF BLOOD AND FLESH, DROID, YET I *CONFESS*...

PUSH PLEASE

WE MECHANICAL CONTRIVANCES HAVE A DISTINCTIVE *SPIRIT* OF OUR OWN. QUITE.

SUDDENLY--

FOOM

AWP!

TALONS OF SIBARTHU! *WHAT--?!*

IMPERIUM EMPORIUM

AW, FOR CRYIN' OUT *LOUD--!!*

WE'RE UNDER *ATTACK!* EMPORIUM *DELIVERY TRUCK* BEARIN' DOWN FAST--ON WHEELS OF *FIRE!*

MY GAWD--IT'S *ENORMOUS!!* IF WE CAN'T MUSTER UP A LITTLE *SPEED*, GUYS--

--WE'LL BE DICED LIKE AN *INSECT* ON ITS *GRILLE!!*

IMPERIUM EMPORIUM

SPEAK, DROID! WHAT--?

I SUGGEST THE TOGGLE SWITCH LABELLED *"SHAKE A LEG!"* SIR.

IMPERIUM EMPORIUM

YOU SEE, WE MUST *ALSO* OUTDISTANCE THEIR NEXT *SALVO.*

MAIN FLOOR!!

PONK

MOTHER OF MAFTRA!! WHAT *ARE* THESE OBJECTS STRIKING OUR HULL--?!

MEN'S FURNISHINGS, MOSTLY--A FEW SMALL APPLIANCES AN' JEWELRY PIECES--!

KINK

CLANK

1:42

STRICTLY *IMPULSE ITEMS!* DON'T SWEAT IT!

JUST GET US *OUTTA* HERE BEFORE--

SHOOM

MEZZANINE!

A FULSOME FUSILLADE OF *HOUSEWARES* BOMBARDS THE TINY CRAFT-- PRESSURE COOKERS, CAST IRON *SKILLETS*, STONEWARE, *STAINLESS--!*

BLAST IT, ARE YA GONNA *WAIT* 'TIL THEY START HEAVIN' THE *HEAVY ARTILLERY??*

REFRIGERATORS--AIR CONDITIONERS--HOME *ENTERTAINMENT* CENTERS--?!

FLOOR IT, CREEP!!

:AHEM: HOWARD...!

KLUNK

CHONK

PLANG!

CHOOM

MMM

NNNNN...

ZOKK! THAT *SOUND*--

LEFT AS YOU STEP OFF THE ESCALATOR!!

--RATTLING THE SHIP'S EVERY *JOINT!*

ULP! A CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE--THE ULTIMATE FUSION O' SONIC AN' PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE!!

THEY'RE PLAYIN' FOR KEEPS!

NONONO NONO

NONONONONO NONONONO

NONONONONONO

AN' GUESS WHO GETS KEPT IF THEY WIN?!

--WHATEVER THAT MEANS. PAY NO ATTENTION.

SEE, I'M SCARED HALF TA DEATH.

...AN' BABBLIN' HYSTERICALLY.

WILLYA PUH-LEASE EVACUATE US FROM THIS SECTOR O' SPACE--?

SO'S I CAN BUTTON MY BILL?!

KORREK--THE FOOT PEDALS.

THESE?

YES! DEPRESS THE LONG, SKINNY ONE!

LOSE HIM ON THE UPGRADE!

IMPERIUM EMPORIUM

KORREK SHAKES HIS HEAD IN BEWILDERMENT AS THE LITTLE SPACECRAFT THAT COULD MAKES THE JUMP INTO DIMENSIONAL SPACE, HURTLING FROM ONE PLANE OF REALITY TO THE NEXT... UNTIL ITS WEARY ENGINES CAN CHUG NO MORE.

THEN...

ALAS...THE "EPOCH WEASEL" HAS FLOWN ITS LAST.

FORTUNATELY, WE'VE REACHED THE HALFWAY POINT--THE WORLD CALLED BOORBANQ!

WH-WHAT IS THIS PLACE--?!

HOLLYWOK CANTEEN

PLASTIC SZECHUAN CUISINE

AN INN OF SORTS, GOOD PRINCE.

...FOR DIMENSIONAL WAYFARERS.

TUTU, YOU AND THE **SWAMP BEAST** WAIT HERE! WE THREE ARE ALREADY IN VIOLATION OF THE **DRESS CODE.** YOU WOULD BE **COMPLETELY** UNACCEPTABLE.

WE SHAN'T BE LONG--I **PROMISE!**

"DRESS CODE? SECRET MESSAGES EXCHANGED BY **CLOTHING?**

PRECISELY... AS SHOULD BE READILY **APPARENT.**

ZOKK'S DEMON'S--!

THE PATRONS ARE-- **ARTIFICIAL MEN!** THEIR GARB-- THEIR DEMEANOR --THEIR SMILES-- THEIR **HAIR--!**

:waaugh: I'M GONNA BE **SICK!**

"THEY'RE NOT ARTIFICIAL, KORREK--THEY'RE **REAL CALIFORNIANS!!"** THE DUCK EXCLAIMS.

"BUT THAT'S **OKAY**-- BEV TOLD ME HOW TA **DEAL** WITH 'EM IF I EVER **MET** ONE: PRETEND YOU'RE JUST LIKE **THEY** ARE!"

JUST KEEP **GRINNIN'**--AN' NO MATTER HOW **VAPID** OR **SELF-CENTERED** THEY ACT, TELL 'EM: "HAVE A NICE DAY!" GO **TO** IT--!

I-- **ALONE?**

UH-HUH! THE DROID AN' ME DON'T LOOK THE **SAME** ENOUGH!

THUS, BRACING HIMSELF, THE WARRIOR PRINCE WADES INTO THE SEA OF **POLYESTER DOUBLE-KNITS,** AND...

TRANSPORTATION TO THE **EMPORIUM?** YEAH, SURE, IT CAN BE **ARRANGED.** NOT BY **ME,** THOUGH.

YA WANNA RAP WITH --**BIG MACK**-- OVER THERE-- CORNER TABLE.

BUT I WARN YA--HE'S A **MEAN** ONE! USEDTA BE AN **EDITOR**--

--'TIL HE FOUND OUT HE COULD INFLICT MORE PAIN AN' HUMILIATION IN THE DIMENSIONAL TRANSPORT BIZ.

I...**SEE.** THANK YOU. HAVE A NICE DAY!

SHORTLY, AT THE CORNER TABLE...

NO **MONEY?** :TSK: HOW 'BOUT **WOMEN?**

WE DO A BRISK **SLAVE TRADE** IN THIS QUADRANT.

SAY, YOU'RE AN **ALIEN,** AREN'CHA? YOU **LEGAL?**

I--I DON'T--

;SIGH; THEN I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T DO **BUSINESS,** MR. KORREK. NO BASIS FOR A TRANSACTION.

I'M **SURE** YOU UNDERSTAND. WE **ALL** NEED A LITTLE STUFFING BETWEEN THE BUNS. THAT'S WHAT LIFE **IS**...!

;GASP;

HAVE WE ANYTHING ELSE TO **SAY** TO ONE ANOTHER...?

AYE!!

HAVE A NICE DAY!!

AAARRRGHH

OH, DEAR... KORREK SCREWED **UP.**

MACK MUST'VE BEEN **POPULAR** WITH THE LOCALS--THEY'RE SHOWIN' **EMOTION.**

I GUESS THEY COULD **RELATE** TO WHERE HIS **HEAD** WAS AT --**MAN.**

YOU WASTED MACK.

Y-YOU-- DID SOMETHING.

THAT'S NOT LAID-BACK, MAN.

THEY'RE GONNA BREAK HIS **FACE, P30.** ANY BRIGHT IDEAS--?

THE **FARCE,** HOWARD. CONSIDER HOW **LAUGHABLE** IT ALL IS.

GRASP THE **ABSURDITY** BY THE--NOSE.

AND-- **FIRE!**

IF YOU **SAY** SO, PAL, BUT--

DOWN WITH PEACOCKS!

HUH?!?

"YOU SEE, HOWARD... THEY'RE COLLAPSING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THEIR OWN **PRETENSIONS.**"

F-F-FAR OUT--!

:NNGH:

WH-WHAT **HAPPENED?!** WHAT **HIT** 'EM?!

THEIR INABILITY TO ACCEPT THE ULTIMATE **RIDICU-LOUSNESS** IN THEMSELVES AND THE COSMOS, SIR.

IS **THAT** ALL--?

THAT'S ALL.

"AND THAT **SAME** FLAW MAY YET FELL BZZK" JOH AND HIS IMPERIUM EMPORIUM."

LINGERIE

WUG! ALL THE NEW STOCK IS OUT, AND WE'VE ALMOST CONQUERED THE **UNIVERSE.**

NO JOE COULD ASK FO' MO'! YOU TWEAKED ME WHERE I **LIVE!**

WHICH REMINDS ME-- WHERE'S MY **CHICKEE?** IT'S PAST **SEVEN--**

--TIME I TAUGHT HER A **LESSON** I'LL NEVER FORGET!

AH, **THERE** SHE IS!

HI, CHICKEE! BOUND, GAGGED, AND READY TO GO **TEN ROUNDS,** I SEE.

OOOH! SOMETHING **HORRIBLE'S** GONNA HAPPEN TO YOU!

:MMPH:

AND I'M **IT!**

PREPARE TO **SQUIRM,** CHICKEE!

TICKLE, TICKLE, **TICKLE--!!**

!!!

MEANWHILE, A **BORROWED** DIMENSIONAL CRUISER HURTLES TOWARD JOE'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS...!

POOP

ACCORDING TO ***TUTU***, THERE'S OUR ***DESTINATION***-- THAT ***LIGHT*** UP AHEAD--

--THE GLISTENING ***SEAT*** OF BZZK'JOH'S FAR-FLUNG ***EMPIRE***--

"--THE ***DEATH STORE!***"

IMPERIUM EMPORIUM

:waaugh: IF THAT'S THE ***SEAT***--I'D HATE TA SEE IT FROM THE ***FRONT!***

WE'RE STILL ***150,000 KILOMETERS*** FROM IT--AN' IT ***ALREADY*** BLOTS OUT THE SCENIC VIEW!

MAFTRA'S EYES! HOW CAN WE HOPE TO ***PENETRATE*** SO MAMMOTH A FORTRESS?

OH, ***THAT*** SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT, SIR. TUTU'S ***SENSORS*** HAVE ALREADY LOCATED A ***VULNERABLE*** POINT IN THE DEATH STORE'S DEFENSES.

YEAH? WHERE--?

PLEASE

:SIGH: WHERE ***ELSE?*** TUTU TURNED UP IRREGULARITIES IN ITS ***BOOKKEEPING*** DEPARTMENT.

I AM SETTING COURSE FOR THAT **WINDOW**, GENTLEMEN.

RIGHT, P30-- RAM US SMACK INTA THE ***EXECUTIVE SUITE!***

DO I SENSE A NEW ***ARDOR*** IN YOUR TONE, FOWL?

CAN IT BE THAT ***YOUR*** LOINS ACHE FOR ***COMBAT***, AS DO ***MINE?***

MY LOINS ***ACHE***, PAL-- BUT IT'S FROM MY ***KNEES*** KNOCKIN' SO HARD!

I JUST WANNA GET THIS ***OVER*** WITH--

--AN' HEAD BACK TA ***NEW YORK***-- WHERE I FEEL ***SAFE!***

SPLANGLK

ZOUNDS AND A HALF-- A SHIPPY-DOO IN OUR MIDST!

AND ***'TISN'T*** PASSING STRANGE-- 'TIS ***STICKING AROUND!!***

SUMMON THE GRENADE THROWERS!!

ZOKK! HIS TROOPS ARE ***UPON*** US ALREADY--

--HURLING PHIALS OF NOXIOUS ***GASES!*** BEWARE!

NAH...!

CHOOM ***CHOOM***

BUT HOLD YER ***NOSE!*** IT'S THE ***PERFUME COUNTER*** CORPS!

CHARLIEEEEEE

SSSZZZIT

:GASP: SLIVERS OF FLYING **METAL--!**

STAPLES-- AN' JUMBO **PAPER CLIPS!** A GREETING CARD FROM **STATIONERY!**

THIS COULD BE **PAINFUL.**

NO, SIR...NOT ONCE I **MAGNETIZE** MYSELF.

HUZZAH! WE'RE FREE TA HACK OUR WAY THROUGH THIS LIVING WALL O' **CUTIES--** TA JOE AN' JENNIFER!

BUT NEITHER FATE NOR JOE WOULD HAVE IT THAT **SIMPLE.**

BEYOND THE FRAGRANT FEMMES WAITS THE SCENT OF THE **LOCKER ROOM--** AND THE MUSCLEMEN OF **SPORTING GOODS.**

THEY'RE ALL **YOURS,** KORREK.

I'M **USE-LESS** THIS ROUND. THEIR **FOREARMS** ARE THE SIZE O' MY **BODY!**

VERY WELL! YOU AND THE **SLOUGH-BEAST** PRESS ON! I'LL JOIN YOU--

--ONCE MY **BLADE** HAS TASTED SOME OF THIS COPIOUS **FLESH!**

OH, **WUG!**

BOTH CHEESE-CAKE AND BEEF-CAKE FAILED TO **PANCAKE** YOU!

YEP-- AN' I'M THE **COWARD** O' THE GROUP.

BETTER **SUR-RENDER** BEFORE KORREK LENDS YA HIS **THEWS,** AN'--

SURRENDER?!? ;HAHAHA; HO. HEE. HO. NYUK. NYUK.

NO.

NOT WHILST I STILL EMPLOY MY SECRET WEAPONS --THE **DEARTH VAPORS!**

EMPLOYEES--OFF WITH YOUR **MASKS!!**

HI! I'M **DONNY DEARTH**--AND THIS IS MY SISTER **TORTUGA.**

WE'RE THE ULTIMATE IN PREPACKED **SWEETNESS**--

--ALSO **LIGHT.** NOTE THE TEETH.

YOU'RE A **CARD,** SIS.

OH YOU **KID!**

*THE TWIN BEAMS STRIKE THE MAN-MOSTER AND THE DUCK--ENCASING THEM IN A SNOWY SHEATH OF **SACCHARINE!***

TH-THEY'RE LAYIN' IT ON-- TOO **THICK!**

WE'RE GONNA ;GASP; **SUFFO-CATE--!**

*BUT THE MURK-DWELLER'S NATURE IS **EMPATHIC:** HE FEELS WHAT **OTHERS** FEEL.*

*THE FOWL'S OUT-RAGE AND **REVUL-SION**-- DONNY AND TORTUGA'S OPPRESSIVE **NICENESS**--*

EEEEEEEK

*--ALL ASSAULT HIM **SIMULTANEOUSLY.** AND THE COMBINATION **DOESN'T** GO DOWN **EASY.***

*THE MINDLESS MAN-BRUTE SHAMBLES TOWARD HIS STUNNED ADVERSARIES. NEITHER HUMAN NOR BEAST HAS EVER BEFORE **RESISTED** THEIR SUGARY ONSLAUGHT-- BUT THEIR UNRELENTING EFFERVESCENCE ONLY **ENRAGES** THIS MISSHAPEN MONSTROSITY!*

*DONNY AND TORTUGA TREMBLE IN **FEAR--!***

*AND WHATEVER KNOWS FEAR--**BURNS** AT MAN-THING'S TOUCH!!*

*THE BEAMS' DISRUPTED, SACCHARINE SHELL **CRUMBLES,** AND--*

FREEZE, JOSEPH!!

I DON'T **WANNA** USE THE **FARCE** IF I DON'T **HAVETA!**

OH, POOFY-GOO! DO YOUR **WORST!**

MY DAY'S **ALREADY** RUINED!

OKAY--YOU **ASKED** FOR IT!

POP!

YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMOR

:URRRK: PIERCED RIGHT TO THE B-B-B-**MARROW!!**

:SOB:

AND ANYWAY-- IT'S NOT **TRUE!**

YOU'RE **CRUEL!!**

:SOB:

I'M A **VERY** FUN GUY! :SNIFF:

I KNOW.

YOU **OKAY,** KIDDO?

MORE OR LESS.

IT'S JUST **LUCKY** I'M NOT VERY **TICKLISH...**

...AND THAT MY **MYSTIC BOLT** WORKED, HUH?

JENNIFER--HOWARD-- THIS WAY, PLEASE. AND I RECOMMEND **HASTE.**

THE DEATH STORE IS GOING OUT OF **BUSINESS.**

WHILE **WE** WERE COPING WITH JOH'S TROOPS-- **TUTU** SABOTAGED THE EMPORIUM'S **ARSENAL.**

HE ACTIVATED EVERY ITEM IN THE **TOY DEPARTMENT.**

GEE, MAYBE WE SHOULD STICK AROUND FOR THE **FIRE SALE.**

ZOKK! YOU SPEAK **NONSENSE,** WOMAN!

NO MAN NEED **BUY** FIRE--!

SKIP IT, PAL. JUST **REJOICE** IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE UNIVERSE IS **SAFE--**

--AN' POINT THIS BUGGY TO THE NEAREST **CIGAR STORE!**

KA-CHOOM

FINIS

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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WHERE DO YOU GO--
WHAT DO YOU DO--
THE NIGHT AFTER YOU SAVED THE UNIVERSE?

COLAN and WEISS

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER — *WRITER / EDITOR*
GENE COLAN — *ARTIST*
TOM PALMER — *INKER*
JOE ROSEN, *LETTERER*
JANICE COHEN, *COLORIST*

TWO A.M.-- AND ALL'S AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED.

HOWARD, JENNIFER KALE, THE MACABRE MAN-THING AND KORREK, THE BARBARIAN HAVE **THWARTED** THE SINISTER MACHINATIONS OF **BZZK 'JOH** THUS AVERTING INTERGALACTIC CATASTROPHE.*

NOW, SAFELY BACK IN **NEW YORK**, THE WATERFOWL BIDS POLITE FAREWELL TO HIS COMRADES-IN-ARMS.

THEN BY ZOKK, YOU'RE A MAGNIFICENT ***HERETIC***, FOWL!

BHARPH BE ***WITH*** YOU!

NOT TA SAY IT WASN'T ***FUN***-- BUT LET'S ***NEVER*** DO IT AGAIN, OKAY?

NOTHIN' PERSONAL... ***HEROISM'S*** JUST AGAINST MY ***RELIGION.***

*LAST ISSUE.-- STEVE.

WHERE DO YOU GO-- WHAT DO YOU DO--

THE NIGHT AFTER YOU SAVE THE UNIVERSE?

NO ROOM IN YOUR LIFE FOR *MAGIC*, EITHER, IS THERE?

THAT'S *SAD.*

YOU'RE A BORN *SORCERER*, HOWARD. CONSIDER IT.

I *HAVE*-- ALONG WITH THE HIDDEN MERITS OF *MALARIA.*

UH-*HUH.*

ANYWAY, TAKE *CARE* OF YOURSELF...!

ALWAYS, KIDDO-- ALWAYS.

AN' WITH *YOU* THREE OUTTA MY LIFE-- IT OUGHTTA BE A *CINCH.*

BZZZZ

GIVE MY *REGARDS* TA THE *COSMOS*, CREW--!

BUT THE WRY **GRIN** *QUICKLY* **VANISHES** *FROM HOWARD'S BILL AS THE TRIO'S* **DIMENSIONAL CRAFT** *STREAKS SKYWARD.*

AND NO **NEW** *EXPRESSION REPLACES IT-- ONLY A CURIOUS-- AND PROFOUND* **EMPTINESS.**

AAAH-- IT'LL *PASS!* THE ONLY UNIVERSAL *CONSTANT* IS *CHANGE*-- AN' ALL THAT.

I'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER A DECENT NIGHT'S *SLEEP.*

AFTER ALL, I HAVEN'T *CHASED AWAY* ALL MY *FRIENDS*-- I'VE REAFFIRMED MY *INDEPENDENCE.*

I'VE-- *WAITAMINIT!* THE LAST TIME I OPENED THIS DOOR, I WOUND UP FACE-TO-KNEE WITH MAN-THING AN' A *MAGICIAN!**

**HTD* 22,--STEVE.*

THIS TIME, I'M PLAYIN' IT *SAFE!*

THE WEIRDOS MAY *BE* THERE--

WHIT

:whew:

WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME FOR MY *HEAD.*

KLUNK

KLUNK

BUT THE *FACT* OF THE MATTER...

...LOATHE AS I AM TO *ADMIT* IT, IS:

I'M A *WRECK.*

AN' *ALL* THE BLAME CAN'T BE ASSIGNED TO THE OCCUPATIONAL STRESSES OF *UNIVERSE-SAVIN'.*

SOME OF IT--

WHOA--!

WHADDAYA KNOW-- TODAY'S THE DAY THE *S.S. DAMNED* IS DUE TO DOCK IN NEW YORK!

PAUL AN' WINDA ARE ON THAT SHIP--!

AN' I THINK...I'M ACTUALLY ANXIOUS TO SEE 'EM!

NOW THERE'S A STATEMENT... WITH ;YAWN; FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS...!

NEVER HAD...MUCH USE FOR... ANYBODY ELSE... BEFORE... EXCEPT BEV, MAYBE...

...AN' SHE'S GONE NOW, MARRIED OFF TO DR. BONG!*

AND-I-CANNOT-ALLOW-MYSELF-TO-CONTEMPLATE-THAT.

*HTD#18.--S.G.

GOTTA GRAB SOME SHUT-EYE... CLEAR MY MIND OF ANYTHING... RESEMBLING...SUBSTANTIVE THOUGHT...!

BAA!

BAA!

BAA!

CONJURE UP...SOME NI-I-ICE... PEACEFUL...

NO! NO!! NICE! PEACEFUL!!

NEEZ!

PIANO!

HOWARD THE CREEP HAS LOST HIS SHEEP AN' DOESN'T KNOW WHERE TA...

KIDNEY!!

BEVERLY!!

...FIND THEM!!

;waaugh!

BEAT IT! G'WAN-- SCRAM--

--OR I'LL KILL Y--

HAH...?

NUTS... MUSTA DRIFTED OFF WITHOUT *REALIZIN'* IT...

OKAY... SO SOMETHIN'S *GNAWIN'* AT ME... ON A LEVEL WHICH I OBVIOUSLY DO NOT INTEND TO *ACKNOWLEDGE.*

... AN' MY OWN *SCREAM* WOKE ME *UP!*

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO *DO...?*

ANSWER: DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM *SUPERFICIALLY...* THE MIDNIGHT-SNACK-BORN-OF-DESPERATION SYNDROME...!

SO WHAT'VE WE GOT? ONE BOX O' SLIGHTLY *CHEWY* POTATO CHIPS...

POT CHIPS

... A BOTTLE O' *SOY SAUCE,* A JAR O' *CHUTNEY...*

AH! AN' A CAN OF *DIPSI LIGHT!*

HARD TO BELIEVE THIS WAS THE APARTMENT OF A *RESTAURATEUR!**

WELL... MAYBE THE LATE *MOVIE'LL* OFFER SOMETHING MORE *NOURISHING...!*

SOLID STATE

CLICK

**LEE SWITZLER, BEV'S UNCLE, WHOM HOWARD MET IN ISH #19. --S.*

A LONG, LOVING LOOK AT MARLENE DIETRICH'S *LEGS...* THAT'D BE STIMULATING...!

FUNNY, HOW I'VE DEVELOPED A WORKING AESTHETIC FOR HAIRLESS-APE *ANATOMY...*

POTATO CHIPS

BUT I GUESS IT WAS *INEVITABLE* THAT I'D--

HOWARD...

HAH...?

POTATO CHIPS

BAM

WAAAGH

SORRY I HADDA DO THET, HOWARD. OUTLAW OR NO, YUH WUZ MAH KINDA HOMBRE!

SH-SHORE 'NUFF... AH'M UNDER *CARDIAC ARREST!*

THAT DOES IT! THE FOOD AN' COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRIES HAVE *FAILED* ME.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY *OWN* HANDS!

WHATEVER'S AT THE *ROOT* O' THIS UNIDENTIFIED FLYING *ANXIETY*...

...MY ONLY *RECOURSE* IS TO TRY AN' *WALK* IT OFF!

AN' HOPE LIKE HELL I SURVIVE THE *WALK!*

WHY DO I FEEL A CERTAIN *REDUNDANCY* ABOUT PRESSIN' THE "*DOWN*" BUTTON...?

OR IS THE *ANSWER* CONTAINED IN THE *QUESTION*?

DOWNSTAIRS...

MAYBE A QUICK *REVIEW* OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS IS IN ORDER...

A CATALOGUING OF ALL AVAILABLE *DATA*... NEAT, SYSTEMATIC...

A COLDLY *RATIONAL* APPROACH TO MADNESS...

LET'S SEE... THE TRIP TO *BAGMOM*... THE CRUISE HOME ON THE *S.S. DAMNED*... THEN BEV AN' I WERE ABDUCTED FROM SHIPBOARD BY *DR. BONG*, WHOM BEV MARRIED TO SAVE MY LIFE...!

THEN I WAS TEMPORARILY TRANSFORMED INTO A *HUMAN*... FOLLOWING WHICH CAME THE RUN-INS WITH *SUDD* AN' THE *SOOF!*...

...WHICH INDIRECTLY LED TO MEETING BEV'S *UNCLE*, AN' BEING CALLED UPON TO SAVE THE *UNIVERSE* WITH JEN, MANNY, AN' KORREK...!*

HTD #15-23.--S.G.

NOPE! NOTHIN' ANXIETY-PROVOKING *THERE!* PURE *EVERYMAN* STUFF IF EVER I--

=whup=

=waaugh= THAT'LL TEACH ME TO KEEP MY EYES ON THE PATH *AHEAD*...

BUMP

...INSTEAD'A DOWN IN THE *GUTTER* WHERE THEY *BELONG!*

FIGURES... I'D STUMBLE OVER ONE O' THE *NATIVES*...!

WONDER IF HE'S...

=phewwgh=

NOPE... SCOTCH AN' AMARETTA...

...BUT DEFINITELY *NOT* RIGOR MORTIS!

HE'LL *LIVE!*

AN' THERE'S NOTHIN' MUCH *I* CAN DO FOR 'IM.

SWEET 'N' SOUR *DREAMS*, FELLA!

=*NUH*-MUH-*UNN*-NGH=

MUH-*RHEE*--

UH DUN YOO *DUHRT*--

HEY!! LEGGO!!

AW, JEEZ-- HE THINKS I'M THE GIRL OF HIS D.T.'S!

DONUT-- LEAF-- *ME-E-E--!*

MUH-*RHEE*... UH *NEE*-UHD YOU, MUH-RHEE...!

UH DIT NUT LUZT BLIN'LY AFFER BIK *BUHKS*... UH WANNA'DA MAKE... A SAFE *PLAZE* FER YOO, MUH-RHREE...!

THIS'S *RIDICULOUS!* FIRST HE CLINGS TOO TIGHTLY TO *MARIE*--

--AN' NOW HE'S *REPEATIN'* HIS ERROR WITH *ME!*

I GOTTA GET OUTTA--

UH-OH!

:OOOOOOOOH:

ID WUZ AWL FER *YOO-OO*, MUH-RHEE...!

HAW!

HAW!

HAW!!

LOOKS LIKE WE FOUND SOME *EASY PLUCKIN'S*, DON'T IT?

AW, RATS...!

:UIP: I REALLY *DION'T* WANNA RESORT TO MEASURES THIS *DRASTIC*...

...BUT THE SITUATION HAS JUST BECOME *CRITICAL!*

SSS

EEOOHH

TWIZE BUHRN-ED-- MUH-RHEEE- TWIZE--⸗SOB⸗

BUD UH SZTILL LUH-*HUV* YOO-OO ⸗SOB⸗

HUH-*URT* ME IV YOO *MUZT*-- BUT DONUT GOO HUH-*WAY*--!!

LEAPIN' HORSE APPLES--*CHEESE IT!* THE CLOWN'S GOT A *YOWL* LIKE A WOUNDED *DINOSAUR!!*

BEAT FEET, BOYS-- BEFORE THE COPS NAB US FOR *UNREQUITED LOVE!!*

⸗cheesh⸗

IT'S REASSURIN' TO KNOW MY *SURVIVAL* INSTINCTS ARE STILL FUNCTIONAL.

THAYR IZ NOO ELZE WUN TO TAKE YOOR PLAZE, MUH-RHEE... WHUH-*HUT'LL* UH DOO...?

UNFORTUNATELY, MY SAUCY *SOULMATE* HERE KEEPS HANGIN' ON LIKE A *BAD HABIT...!*

BUD... BUH-*HUD*...

...BUD IFFOO NEEDOO BE FUH-*REE*...UH WI-UHL LEDDOO GUH-*HO* SOB MUH-RHEE...!!

SOB SOB

TH-THANKS, CHUM-- FROM *MARIE*, TOO, NO DOUBT--!

POOR SLOB... CAN'T ESCAPE HIS *PAIN* EVEN IN *STUPOR*.

AN' JUST FOR THE *RECORD*, MY OWN PETTY ANGUISH HAS YET TO *SUBSIDE*, EITHER.

MAYBE I'M NOT LOOKIN' IN--

AWWP

WUMP

OH, NO!! *NO*!! MY *BAGS*!!

LOOK WHAT YOU'VE *DONE* TO MY *BAGS*!!

ALL MY *TREASURES*-- HOW WILL I EVER FIT THEM BACK IN MY *BAGS*?!?

I-- I'M *SORRY*, LADY--!

PIGEON *CLAWS*, YOU ARE!!

HUMAN SEXUAL RESPONSE

YOU'RE JUST LIKE MY DARLING SON *EBEN*-- PUNCH, HIT, KILL, MAIM, GOUGE, DISFIGURE, *JINK*!!

THEN YOU'RE ALWAYS *SORRY*!!

WELL, HERE'S TO YOUR *REMORSE*, LOWLIFE!!

PTUU

waaugh

OKAY, GRANNY, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU *FEEL* ABOUT IT--

--STUFF YER *OWN* BLASTED BAGS!!

AS FAR AS *I'M* CONCERNED--

--YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER FORGETTABLE *INCIDENT.*

THAT'S WHAT *YOU* THINK!

BUT I USED TO TEACH *ENGLISH LIT,* AND I KNOW *BETTER!*

I'M SYMBOLICALLY *SIGNIFICANT* TO YOUR STORY! I'M INTEGRAL TO THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE!

SEVERAL BLOCKS *LATER...*

LIQUOR

TELEPHONE

Y'KNOW... THERE WAS A *TIME,* AS RECENTLY AS AN *HOUR* AGO...

...WHEN I ALMOST COULD'VE *AGREED* WITH HER! BUT IT WON'T *WASH* ANYMORE.

I'M *NOT* HER "DARLING SON EBEN"...!

RRING

BENEATH THIS CRUDE, RUMPLED VENEER THERE STILL SKULKS SOME VAGUE APPROXIMATION OF *PANACHE!*

EVEN IN *THIS* LUNATIC WORLD, I--

AW, *NO*...!

RRING

ANOTHER INTRUSION... AN' ANOTHER *CHOICE.*

AH, WELL... CARPE DIEM.

HELLO...?

HUH? WHASSAT...?

WHY'RE YOU *WHISPERIN'?*

TALK *LOU*--

*?!@!!-+%

TELEPHONE

LADY, THIS IS A *PAY PHONE!*

YEAH, BUT *NOBODY* MAKES *OBSCENE CALLS* TO A PAY PHONE--!

VARIETY? YEAH, WELL ...THAT'S TRUE,

NO, I SUPPOSE NOBODY *WOULD* INSIST THE NUMBER BE CHANGED.

RIGHT-- IT'S A *PUBLIC* PHONE-- NO, YOU DIDN'T INVADE *MY* PRIVACY--!

AGREED. NO REASON AT ALL TO CALL THE *COPS.*

BUT WE'VE *STILL* GOT NOTHIN' TO *SAY* TO EACH OTHER, SWEETS!

CLICK

:sigh:

AMAZING-- THE *LENGTHS* TO WHICH US *DIS-CONNECTED* TYPES'LL GO TO MAKE *CONTACT* WITH--

DID I THINK "*US*"--?!

MUST'VE. NOBODY *ELSE* IN HERE.

IS *THAT* WHAT ALL THIS CRAZINESS IS ABOUT?

WITH ALL THE *ACTIVITY* CROWDIN' MY LIFE LATELY...

...IT'S *TRUE* I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH TIME TO THINK *EVALUATIVELY.*

I GET THE FEELING I'VE JUST BEEN *REACTING* BY REFLEX...

...WITHOUT EVER ASKIN' MYSELF WHAT IT ALL *MEANS...*

...OR WHERE IT'S *LEADIN'...* OR WHAT *I* WANT OUT OF IT!

I MEAN, IT REALLY *ISN'T* LOGICAL, OR REASONABLE, OR--

EEEIIIEEEE

THE BABE AT THE BUS STOP--!!

BOOING!

NUTS-- I LOOKED RIGHT *AT* 'ER-- AN' NEVER EVEN *NOTICED*--!

SHOULD'A REALIZED SHE'D BE A BEACON IN THE *NIGHT* FOR EVERY--

BUT, TO THE WATERFOWL'S ASTONISHMENT, IT'S THE **ATTACKER**, NOT THE WOMAN, WHO LIES GASPING FOR BREATH ON THE COLD PAVEMENT.

Y-YOU... YOU'RE... *OKAY*...?!

NO. I AM NOT OKAY.

MISS...?

NO...

NO...

NOOOOOO!!

I DID IT *AGAIN!* I BEAT HIM TO A *PULP!!*

SMASH

WHA'--?

Y-YOU MEAN... YOU'VE TROUNCED THIS TURKEY *BEFORE*...?!

DON'T YOU CALL HIM *NAMES!* HE'S MY *HUSBAND!!*

Y-YEAH?

YEAH!!

WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO INJECT A LITTLE *EXCITE-MENT* INTO OUR DRAB LIVES BY ACTING OUT SOME OF OUR *FANTASIES*, SEE?!

FRANKLY-- *NO.*

I STAND OUT HERE, ALL *ALONE*, 'TIL I GET GOOD AND *SCARED*--

--THEN ROD *ATTACKS* ME!

HE'S SUPPOSED TO *SUBDUE* ME-- CARRY ME BODILY BACK TO THE APARTMENT AND FORCE ME TO PERFORM A PASSIONATE *FANDANGO--!!*

GOD--THE *THOUGHT* OF IT INFUSES ME WITH *FRENZY!!*

BUT WHEN I *STRUGGLE*, ROD WON'T FIGHT *BACK!!*

SO FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS, IT'S ENDED LIKE *THIS* EVERY NIGHT!

SAY...WHAT ABOUT *YOU*? I MEAN, I CAN SEE YOU'RE A *DUCK*, BUT...

THE FANDANGO IS *UNIVERSAL*, AND...!

UH-UH, SISTER-- I GET ENOUGH O' THE *ROUGH STUFF* IN REAL LIFE!

LEAVE ME OUTTA YER *FANTASIES*,

NOW, WHERE *WAS* I... OH, YEAH! IT ISN'T LOGICAL, OR REASONABLE...

...OR EVEN *PLAUSIBLE*...

...THAT SOMEBODY COULD EXPERIENCE WHAT *I* HAVE IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS...

...AN' NOT HAVE *SOME* OPINION ABOUT IT!

EXCEPT-- I *DON'T!* OR, *DO* I?

SURE, I DO! I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT IT *IS!*

HOW'S A SENTIENT BEING *SUPPOSED* TO FEEL ABOUT TRAVERSIN' THE COSMOS...

...BECOMIN' THE PRIME TARGET OF A GANG O' *LUNATICS*...

ALL NIGHT DONUT

DONUTS

...AN LOSIN' THE HAIRLESS APE *CLOSEST* TO 'IM?!

THE *WEIRD* PART IS THAT I HAVETA *ASK* THE QUESTION AT ALL...!

WHY DIDN'T I--?

OBOY, HERE IT COMES *AGAIN.*

THE CASE O' THE DESERTED *DONUT SHOP.*

CASH REGISTER'S BEEN *CLEANED OUT...!*

NO *CLERK* ON THE PREMISES...!

I'M *AFRAID* TO CHECK OUT THE *BACK ROOM!*

ALL I NEED TO *COMPLETE* THIS NIGHT IS TO FIND A *GLAZED CORPSE* IN THE DEEP-FRIER!

MMMPH

HMMPMEE

YOU PROBABLY WON'T *BELIEVE* THIS-- BUT YOU'RE AN UNEXPECTED *SURPRISE.*

YRRR-UH-DUHHNNGH

RIGHT, I'M A *DUCK.*

WHAT HAPPENED-- YOUR STANDARD *STICK-UP?*

gulp NAH... DISSATISFIED *CUSTOMER...!*

CLAIMED HE BROKE A *TOOTH...* BITIN' INTA MY *MAPLE DELIGHT...!*

SO THE BUM ASKS FER 'IS *MONEY* BACK, AN' I SAYS, "NO *REFUNDS,*" SO HE *DECKS* ME...

...TIES ME UP, *GAGS* ME WITH A *CRULLER,* EMPTIES THE *REGISTER...*

...AN' CHECKS OUT, SAYIN' I'M LUCKY HE DON'T *SUE...!!*

UH... SO YOU WANNA BUZZ THE *FUZZ,* OR WHAT...?

:ha ha: NAH! LET IT RIDE! THE JERK'S PROB'LY RIGHT! AN' IT WAS A SLOW NIGHT, ANYHOW! ONLY GOT A COUPL'A BUCKS!

HEY, LISTEN...I OWE YOU! YOU WANNA DONUT? ON THE HOUSE, NATCH! GRATIS! IT'S YOURS!

TH-THANKS... I'LL PASS.

BUT A CUP O' COFFEE...!

TO WHICH THE BURLY COOK RESPONDS WITH A NOD, AND...

...THE CONVERSATION PROCEEDS.

SO TELL ME-- WHAT'S A DUCK DOIN' TRAIPSIN' AROUND AT THIS HOUR, HUH?

THINKIN' MOSTLY-- BETWEEN INTERLUDES OF HYSTERIA.

NO JOSHIN'? DUCKS THINK?? WHADDAYA THINK ABOUT--?!

OH, YOU KNOW-- LOVE, DEATH, EXISTENCE, THE SUPER-BOWL...!

ALL THE REALLY HEAVY STUFF.

"AW, C'MON-- YOU'RE PUTTIN' ME ON!!"

"UH-UH. WHEN I FOUND YOU, I WAS WONDERIN' WHY THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME KINDA TIME-GAP BETWEEN A GIVEN EVENT AN' MY FEELINGS ABOUT IT."

"OOOH-- YEAH! I GOTCHA! LIKE THE WORLD SERIES! THERE'S AN EVENT I-- HEY! LOOK! THE SUN'S COMIN' UP ALREADY!"

"IT IS?!?"

ALL NIGHT DONUTS

DONUTS

DONUTS

IN THAT CASE, PAL, I GOTTA RUN!

I'M MEETIN' A SHIP THAT DOCKS AT DAWN!

TWENTY **SHORT** BLOCKS DOWNTOWN, FOUR **LONG** BLOCKS CROSSTOWN... AND AN EXHAUSTED, BUT SOMEWHAT LESS RATTLED FOWL ARRIVES **ON TIME** AT PIER 43...!

OH, PAUL-- ***WOOK!!*** I WEFUSE TO BEWIEVE MY ***WETINAS!!***

THEWE! ***THEWE!!*** IT'S ***HIM!!*** HE'S AWIVE!! HE'S ***AWIVE!!*** OH, JOY--!!

NOW YOU WEMAIN ***WOOTED*** WIGHT WHEWE YOU ARE!! DON'T YOU ***STWAY!!***

NOT TO ***WORRY***, WINDA HONEY. I DON'T THINK I'VE GOT THE ***STRENGTH...!***

MOMENTS LATER...!

I WAS DESPEWATEWY AFWAID YOU WERE AN ***HAWWUCINATION***-- BUT YOU'WE ***WEAL!*** YOU'WE WEAWWY ***WEAL!!***

AND, UH... APPAWENTWY, SOUND ***ASWEEP.***

AW-W-W, WOEBEGONE WITTLE CWEATUWE--!

MAYBE... BUT AT LEAST HE'LL ***AWAKEN*** TO GOOD NEWS!

HOW TWUE, PAUL, HOW TWUE...!

IMAGINE HIS ***WEWIEF*** WHEN HE WEARNS HOW OUR FORTUNES HAVE ***CHANGED...!***

NEXT

THE FOWL'S ASCENT TO HIGH SOCIETY-- A BUSINESS PROPOSITION-- PLUSH DIGS-- LARCENY ON LONG ISLAND-- PLUS THE VAPID VILLAINY OF--

THE RINGMASTER AND HIS **CIRCUS OF CRIME!**

HOWARD THE DUCK™

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK

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THE FEATHERED FURY TOSSES HIS HAT INTO THE RINGMASTER'S CIRCUS OF CRIME!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

GETTING SMOOTH!

ONCE PAST THE INITIAL SHOCK OF WAITING ON A **DUCK,** MEHITABEL MONTEITH OF MACY'S **BOYS' DEPARTMENT** TACKLES THE PROBLEM LIKE THE 34-YEAR VETERAN OF THE **RETAIL WARS** SHE IS!

NOW, NOW-- WET'S NOT **WUSH** HIM!

SHALL I **WRAP** IT, OR--?

WINDA, HE'S **TRIED ON** EVERY JACKET IN THE STORE! HE'S A PERFECT SIZE SEVEN **HUSKY!**

OH, YES, IT'S A **MARVELOUS** FIT...

...AND THAT SEVILLE RIPE OLIVE **GREEN** IS THE VERY **LATEST** COLOR!

THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE **DESSICATED LIVER BROWN.**

...AND THE BRUISED ANGUS BLUE-BLACK!

BOYS DEPT.

C-822

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR • **GENE COLAN** ARTIST • **KLAUS JANSON** INKER
I. WATANABE LETTERER • **JAN COHEN** COLORIST

BUT THIS TIME, SWEETS, I GOTTA **AGREE!**

IF I LOOKED ANY **SMOOTHER,** MY IMAGE WOULDN'T STICK TO THE **MIRROR.**

I'LL **WEAR** IT!

AN EXCELLENT SELECTION...VERY TASTEFUL...AND $102.60 WITH **TAX.**

CASH OR **CHARGE?**

CASH!

CASH--??

;AWP;

WHEN THE TRANSACTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED...

UH, **PAUL** ...ALL THAT **CABBAGE** YOU'RE CARRYING?

WHY ARE YOU CARRYIN' IT?

I DUNNO... BECAUSE IT WOULDN'T WALK ON THE **LEASH?**

PAUL...EVERY TIME YOU **FLASH** THAT WAD OF BILLS...

...IT'S LIKE A GREAT GREEN **BEACON,** SHINING IN THE NIGHT TO EVERY **MUGGER** IN A TEN-BLOCK **RADIUS!**

REALLY... LET'S STOP AT A **BANK**...CONVERT IT TO **TRAVELER'S CHECKS...!**

RIGHT! AND HOW OFTEN HAVE WE HAD THAT KIND OF MONEY TO THROW AROUND?

PAUL, IT'S OVER TWO THOUSAND **CLAMS...!**

WE MIGHT AS WELL **ENJOY** IT, PAL! THAT'S WHAT IT'S **FOR!**

YOU **CAN'T** ENJOY IT LAYIN' FACE-DOWN IN AN **ALLEY--!**

DUCK, YOU ARE **PARANOID**-- AND **NOT** ABOUT MUGGERS!

YOU'RE AFRAID OF SPENDING **MONEY.**

AMO

PES CIGARS

ONLY MY **OWN,** PAUL... NOT YOURS.

LET'S **TEST** THAT STATE-MENT.

A BOX OF YOUR **BEST CIGARS,** FRIEND.

PAUL-- NO!!

YES, SIR! THAT'LL BE $38.88!

-CIGARS-

HAVE I PROVED MY **POINT?** YOU'VE GOT TO JETTISON THAT **POVERTY MENTALITY,** HOWARD! IT'S **OBSOLETE--** NOW THAT I'VE FOUND A **MARKET** FOR MY ARTISTIC TALENT!

Y-YOU **STILL** SHOULDN'T-- BE CARRYIN'-- THAT MUCH CASH--

--Y' KNOW.

I KNOW. HAVE A CIGAR.

HAVANA SUPREME

OUTSIDE...

TAXI!

EDDIE MOORE FOR MAYOR

BAR

TAXI

GWACIOUS! IS THEWE NO END TO HIS EXTWAVAGANCE?

THIS ONE I **APPROVE** OF! ANYTHING TO AVOID THE **SUBWAY!**

WHERE TO, MAC?

THE "FIFTH SEASON"--61ST OFF PARK.

IT'S A WESTEWANT, HOWARD--VEWY CWASSY.

AND WE'RE ALL GONNA HAVE TO ADJUST MOVING IN THOSE CIRCLES...

...AND TO EATING WELL, AND DRESSING WELL...

...BECAUSE PAUL SAME WILL SOON BE A NAME TO RECKON WITH IN THE ART WORLD!

"AW, JEEZ," HOWARD GROANS, "WE'RE GONNA HEAR THE SAGA ONE MORE TIME:

"THERE HE WAS, PATHETIC PAUL SAME, AN ARTISTIC GENIUS ADRIFT--ABOARD THE LUXURY LINER S.S. DAMNED.

"HIS FRIENDS HOWARD AND BEVERLY HAD BEEN ABDUCTED FROM THE SHIP BY THE EVIL DR. BONG.* PAUL,LEFT BEHIND TO FROLIC, DECIDED TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT AND PASSED THE DREARY HOURS WITH HIS SKETCHPAD.

*HTD #15.--S.G.

"AT FIRST, HE DREW ONLY SMOKESTACKS, RAILING, LIFEBOATS AND SHUFFLEBOARD PUCKS, SHUNNING ALL ANIMATE SUBJECT MATTER, UNTIL ONE DAY...

"...HE WAS SEDUCED BY THE ANGLE OF A FATEFUL CHEEKBONE.

"AS HAIRLESS APES OFTEN DO WHEN BEING STARED AT, SHE NOTICED...

"...AND CHOSE TO INQUIRE **WHY.**

"PAUL **GLADLY** SHOWED HER AND **GEN-EROUSLY** OFFERED TO GIVE HER THE SKETCH.

"BUT, NO-- SHE WOULDN'T **DREAM** OF ACCEPT-ING IT AS A **GIFT!**

"HE'D **CAPTURED** HER! SHE **WANTED** TO PAY!

"SHE **DEMANDED** HE QUOTE HER A PRICE! HE CHUCKLED. HE COULON'T TAKE LESS THAN **FIFTY BUCKS,** HE SAID.

"HE WAS **CERTAIN** THIS OUT-RAGEOUS SUM WOULD **BE** MORE THAN SHE COULD **POSSIBLY** AFFORD.

"BUT IT WAS **NOT** TO BE.

"IN FACT, HE **HOPED** SO-- HE WANTED TO MAKE A **PRESENT** OF THE DRAWING.

"DID HE HAVE CHANGE FOR A **HUNDRED,** SHE ASKED.

"HE DIDN'T. SHE TOLD HIM TO **KEEP** IT-- AND INFORMED HIM THAT SHE WAS NOT THE **ONLY** AFFLUENT PER-SON ON THIS CRUISE.

"THERE WERE **OTHERS** WHO WOULD HAPPILY PAY AS MUCH FOR A **SERIOUS** POR-TRAIT BY A **SERIOUS** NEW ARTIST.

"SHE OFFERED TO MAKE **INTRO-DUCTIONS.** HE **AC-CEPTED.**

"TWENTY-FIVE PORTRAITS **LATER,** HE WAS **$2500 RICHER."**

HA! YOU TELL IT BETTER THAN I DO! BUT YOU LEFT OUT THE BEST PART!

WHAT--A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE POWER GAME SHE PLAYED ON YOU?

FIFTH SEASON

HUH? NO, NO--HER NAME! I'VE BEEN SAVING THAT AS A SURPRISE!

SHE WAS--IRIS RARITAN!

GOSH! WHO'S IRIS RARITAN?

MEWEWY THE HEIWESS TO THE WAWITAN WECWEATION WECWAMATION CONGWOMEWATE MIWWIONS! AND A HIGHWY WESPECTED PATWON OF THE ARTS!

OH! THAT IRIS RARITAN!

MOWEOVER, PAUL'S SWEET ON HER! ;TEE HEE;

HE TWIES TO HIDE IT, BUT I CAN TELL--YES, I CAN--MM-HMM!

OKAY, ENOUGH OF THAT! LET'S GET INSIDE!

GOOD DAY, SIR, AND WELCOME TO--!

OH, DEAR.

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT WE DO NOT ALLOW PETS ON THE PREMISES.

PETS--?

YOUR **DUCK**, SIR-- I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO REMOVE IT **OUTDOORS.**

WHY? HE'S **WEARING** A COAT AND TIE! HE'S BETTER-DRESSED THAN **I** AM!

BESIDES, CHUM-- I'M NOT HIS **PET.**

I'M THE **BRAINS** OF THIS OUTFIT.

:GASP: IT-- **SPOKE!**

YES...AND NOW, IF YOU CAN SURMOUNT YOUR SENSE OF **WONDER...**

...IRIS RARITAN IS EXPECTING ALL **THREE** OF US.

AH! MISS **RARITAN!**

AH! WELL! THAT EXPLAINS **EVERYTHING!**

PLEASE FOLLOW ME.

WHAT A **STWANGE** WEMARK--!

WHAT COULD IWIS' **NAME** POSSIBWY EXPWAIN ABOUT **US?**

NOTHING. IT'S A GRACEFUL WAY OUT OF A **FAUX PAS.**

SURE. WE CAN'T EXPECT HIM TO TAKE THE **AWKWARD** WAY OUT--

--AND **APOLOGIZE!**

GWACIOUS! I DO BEWIEVE YOU'WE *JEAWOUS* OF PAUL'S NEWFOUND *SEWF-ASSUWANCE!*

;AHEM; MISS RARITAN? YOUR *GUESTS* HAVE ARRIVED.

KNOCK KNOCK

PAUL AND WINDA?

WELL, OPEN THE *CURTAIN,* FRED--

--AND SHOW THEM--!

OH, *MY!*

YOU MUST BE *HOWARD.* PAUL WARNED ME I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT.

YOU REALLY *ARE* A DUCK, AREN'T YOU?

PURELY AN ACCIDENT OF *GENETICS,* MISS RARITAN.

IF NOT FOR HEREDITY, I MIGHT'VE BEEN AN *EGGPLANT!*

;HAHA; ANYTHING IN *YOUR* SHOW TO EQUAL THAT, MR. THRALLER?

OH, INDEED *YES--*

--BUT NAUGHT TO *SURPASS* IT, I MUST CONFESS.

GOOD DAY, ONE AND ALL.

MR. THRALLER OWNS A *CIRCUS,* PAUL. THEY'LL BE PERFORM-ING AT MY *PARTY* FRIDAY EVENING...

...TO WHICH ALL OF YOU ARE *INVITED*, NATURALLY.

I WANT US TO SEE A *LOT* OF EACH OTHER BEFORE YOU GO HOME TO CLEVELAND.

;TEE HEE; DID I NEGWECT TO *MENTION*--

--THE ATTWACTION IS *MUTUAL*.

YEAH, WELL... NO ACCOUNTING FOR *TASTE*.

MEANWHILE, ATOP ONE OF THE HIMALAYAS' MORE **FORBIDDING** PEAKS...

...IN THE FORTRESS OF THE MAN CALLED **DR. BONG**...

...THE FORMER **BEVERLY SWITZLER** DINES ALONE.

WELL... *ALMOST*.

NEEZ

;TSK; LASSIE! BAD *GIRL*!

YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO *BEG*!

;SNIFF;

NEEZ...?

Y'KNOW, IT'S BAD ENOUGH I *MARRIED* YOUR MASTER TO SAVE HOWARD'S *LIFE**...

...BUT IT'S *UNFORGIVABLE* THAT HE NEVER PAYS ANY *ATTENTION* TO ME!

OH, ALL RIGHT-- *HERE!* ONE OF US MAY AS WELL BE HAPPY!

I DON'T HAVE ANY *APPETITE*, ANYWAY.

*HTD #19.--S.G.

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS *IS*, LASSIE?

IT'S MY ***MOTHER'S MARRIAGE!*** PLENTY OF FIREWORKS AND PROMISES ***BEFORE*** THE CEREMONY--

YOU ***GOT*** IT!

--AND AFTER-WARDS, A CROCK OF--

NEEZ

?

AND I'VE ABOUT ***HAD*** IT!

NEEZ?

DOWNSTAIRS, BEV'S ***HUSBAND,*** EMBITTERED BY HIS ***DEFEAT*** AT THE DUCK'S HANDS*, OCCUPIES HIMSELF WITH DESULTORY EXPERIMENTION--

DRAT! IT TURNED ***RED!*** I WANTED ***OCHRE!***

*HTD #20--S.

--WHEN ***SUDDENLY***--

SLAM

IS IT ***SOUP*** YET, DING-DONG??

:GASP: WHO ***DARES***--?!

JEEZ--HOW QUICKLY THEY ***FORGET!*** I'M THE WOMAN YOU'VE LUSTED AFTER IN YOUR HEART EVER SINCE WE MET IN COLLEGE-- ***REMEMBER?***

NAH-- THEY NEVER ***DO.***

WELL, LISTEN, PAL--I'M ***NOT*** ABOUT TO BE RELE-GATED TO A CAGE IN YOUR ***MENAGERIE!*** I'M YOUR ***WIFE,*** SEE?! SO TAKE YOUR STUPID ***BELL*** OFF YOUR HEAD--

--AND LET'S PLAY HOUSE!!

VERY WELL.

BUT BE FOREWARNED... DR. BONG PLAYS *EVERY* GAME... FOR *KEEPS!*

:SHHH: DON'T--YOU'LL BALLOON--MY EXPECTATIONS--!

CLAP CLAP

:MMMM: NEEZ, *NEEZ!!*

NEW YORK, SEVERAL DAYS LATER:

SO BEV'S *UNCLE* LOANED YOU THIS APARTMENT TILL THE LEASE EXPIRES...

...AND BEV'S *MARRIED* TO DR. BONG...!

IT'S HARD TO *DIGEST*... BUT IT UNDERSCORES MY POINT: *WHY* GO BACK TO CLEVELAND?

WHAT *FUTURE* IS THERE FOR AN ARTIST IN CLEVELAND? NEW YORK HAS IT *ALL*--

--MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, A *PUBLIC*--

--AND *IWIS!*

TILL SHE FINDS *AN-OTHEW* ARTIST TO PATWONIZE.

HUH?

:TCH: TOO *SUBTLE,* WINDA.

RRING

NEXT TIME TRY A--!

JUST A SEC.

HELLO?

YES, THIS IS--!

LEE?!

WHERE *ARE* YOU?

CLEVELAND! AND HOW FAST CAN *YOU* GET HERE? I'VE STUMBLED ONTO AN *IDEAL* BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY--

--AND I WANT TO TAKE *YOU* IN AS MY *PARTNER!*

B-BUT, LEE--WE HARDLY **KNOW** EACH OTHER--AND **I** HAVEN'T GOT ANY **CAPITAL** TO INV--!

YES, BUT--!

OKAY--IF YOU **SAY** SO! SEE YA!

WHAT WAS **THAT?**

GOOD NEWS--FROM CLEVELAND.

I--I'VE BEEN OFFERED--A **JOB**--!

*ONLY LATER, DURING THE LONG--AND EXPENSIVE--TAXI RIDE TO IRIS RARITAN'S LONG ISLAND **ESTATE**, DOES THE FOWL REALIZE THAT LEE SWITZLER FAILED TO **SPECIFY** THE NATURE OF THE BUSINESS...*

*...AND THAT HE, HOWARD, COULDN'T CARE **LESS.***

*"IT'S THE STABILITY--OR THE **ILLUSION** OF IT-- I WANT," SAYS THE DUCK.*

PAUL HANDS THE DRIVER $27.55...

*...AND THE TRIO STEPS OUT OF THE CAB AND INTO ANOTHER **WORLD.***

REALLY! I WASN'T **PREPARED** FOR--!

OH, SHUSH!

IWIS! IT'S **BWEATH-TAKING!**

LET'S GO MAKE YOUR **DEBUT.**

DEBUT--?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--YOUR **ATTENTION,** PLEASE!

I WANT YOU TO MEET MY LATEST **DIS-COVERY--**

--MR. **PAUL SAME--**

--AND HIS FRIENDS, MS. **WINDA WESTER**--

--AND MR. **HOWARD THE DUCK.**

THIS IS EMBAW-WASSING.

YEAH, BUT DON'T **SHOW** IT...

"JUST **BASK** IN THEIR HORROR AND CONSTERNATION."

YOU'RE MORE OR LESS **ACCUSTOMED** TO THAT REACTION, AREN'T YOU, HOWARD?

YOU SEEMED TO ENJOY IT AS MUCH AS **I** DID.

YOU **WIKE** DIS-OWIENTING YOUR GWESTS, IRIS? VEWY INTEWESTING.

COME **AWONG,** HOWARD. WET'S SOCIAWIZE.

AT THE **BUFFET** TABLE, WINDA TAKES A TENTATIVE STAB AT **SMALL TALK...**

WOVEWY **SHINDIG** IWIS HAS THWOWN TOGETHEW, ISN'T IT, HMMM?

IS THAT A **SPEECH IMPEDIMENT** OR AN **AFFECTATION,** DEARIE?

NO, NEVER MIND--!

YOU ARRIVED WITH THE **DUCK,** DIDN'T YOU?

DREADFUL BID FOR ATTENTION THAT! IRIS' PENCHANT FOR THE UNUSUAL HAS **OVER-EXTENDED** ITSELF.

MIDGETS ARE SUCH **DISTASTEFUL** LITTLE CREATURES-- REGARDLESS OF **HOW** THEY'RE ATTIRED.

GET 'ER, WINDA, BEFORE I--!

ISN'T THAT A CUWIOUS **COINCIDENCE?**

WHAT, DEARIE?

I FEEL **EXACTWY** THE SAME ABOUT WUDE WADIES WITH **THWEE CHINS!**

BETTEW GET A **FACE-WIFT,** "DEAWIE"-- FWOM THE **KNEES UP!**

OKAY-- WHAT'S SO **HIWAWIOUS??**

HAHAHEEHAWAAUGH

SO **THEWE!!**

TH-- THE-- DEE-- DEEP--

--**CONVICTION** IN--

;WAAUGH!

SUDDENLY, THE CROWD'S ATTENTION IS DI-VERTED BY A SHRILL--

WHEEEET

WHEAT?

NOW WHAT?

LADIEEES AND GEN-TUL-MEN-- MS. IRIS RARITAN PRESENTS FOR YOUR ENTER-TAINMENT--

--A CIRCUS IN YOUR MIDST!!

STARRING CANNONBALL-- PRINCESS PYTHON-- THE CLOWN-- AND THE GREAT GAMBONNOS!

¡EEEEK!

G-GOOD GOD--!!

I KNEW IT-- IRIS HAS LOST HER LAST MARBLE!

¡SIGH¡ I'M TOO JADED TO CARE, DARLING.

WELL, THIS IS... DIFFERENT.

DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT'S A... REAL SNAKE?

YOUR GUESTS SEEM SOMEWHAT-- **SHAKEN,** IRIS.

UH-**HUH!**

CLAP

CLAP

IT'S CALLED INJECTING SOME **NEW ZIP** INTO THE **"OLD MONEY."**

WHEEE!! LOOK AT 'EM GO!!

WHEEEEEET

AND **NOW,** LADIES AND GENTS --THE PIECE DE RESISTANCE! PLEASE **LOOK THIS WAY!**

GAZE INTO THE **WHIRLING DISC** ABOVE MY BRIM--AND JOURNEY WITH ME TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE **UNIVERSE!**

BEYOND THE **PLANETS**-- BEYOND THE **STARS**--

"--DEEPER, EVER DEEPER INTO THE VOID-- ALL THE WAY TO TOTAL **DARKNESS!!"**

YOU *SEE* NOTHING...

YOU *HEAR* NOTHING...

...AND *WE* MAKE OFF WITH EVERYTHING YOU *OWN!* NOW *THAT'S* FUNNY!

GET *PICKIN'*, BOYS AND GIRL!

THUS, THE *CIRCUS OF CRIME** SETS ABOUT ITS THIEVERY...

**IN CASE YOU HADN'T RECOGNIZED THEM:--S.G.*

OOH! CASH *MONEY!*

...WHILE IRIS AND HER GUESTS STARE BLANKLY AT THE *LIGHT SHOW* IN THEIR *HEADS.*

VERY *GOOD*, MY PRETTY!

THIS *CON-CLUDES* OUR PERFORM-ANCE!

WE *THANK* YOU.

GOOD HEALTH-- GOOD LUCK--

--AND GOODB--!

ON *SECOND* THOUGHT...

IT SEEMS THERE'S *ONE* VALUABLE ITEM WE'VE *OVERLOOKED.*

COME, WATERFOWL! THE *RINGMASTER* IS GOING TO MAKE YOU A *STAR!!*

SOME **EIGHT HOURS** LATER, DAWN'S FIRST RAYS STREAM THROUGH THE FRENCH DOORS...

WH- WHAT **HAPPENED?!**

MY GOD-- I'M LATE TO WORK--I NEED A SHAVE--AND I'VE BEEN **ROBBED!**

WHILE SOMEWHERE ON **INTER-STATE 80...**

RING MASTER MAGNIFICENT CIRCUS

...DEEP IN THE HEART OF **PENNSYLVANIA...**

--AND SO, CANNON-BALL, THE FINAL **TALLY** IS--?

CASH: $9,564-- **JEWELRY:** NEIGHBORHOOD OF $**700,000** --THOSE RICH FOLKS DON'T **SCRIMP!**

NOT A **ZIRCON** OR A **TIMEX** IN THE HOUSE!

AH--AND LET'S NOT FORGET OUR NEW **ADDITION!**

SOUNDS AS IF HE'S **AWAKE!**

SAM

WAAAUGH

SO, DUCK-- YOU'VE RUN AWAY TO JOIN THE **CIRCUS!**

WHA--?

YOU'RE **ONE** OF US NOW, HOWARD...

...LIKE IT OR **NOT.**

YOUR DIS-APPEARANCE FROM THE **PARTY** MARKS YOU AS AN **ACCOMPLICE...**

TO **WHAT?**

*AND WHEN THE RING-HAS **EXPLAINED...***

RINGO, I AM **AGHAST.**

I'M **ALSO** THE ONLY **WITNESS,** I TAKE IT.

CORRECT! IT'S ONE **DUCK'S** WORD AGAINST THAT OF SIX **HUMANS.**

SO YOUR OPTIONS ARE **TWO:** JOIN US IN THE SPOTLIGHT-- OR JOIN US IN **PRISON.**

;waaugh;

RING MASTER MAGNIFICENT CIRCUS

NEXT:

REPERCUSSIONS!

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OKAY, FOLKS--IT'S HAPPY TIME!

DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT SUDDEN DEATH?

COLAN JANSON

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

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LAST NIGHT, HOWARD WAS ABDUCTED FROM **IRIS RARITAN'S** LONG ISLAND MANSION BY THE **RING-MASTER** AND HIS **CIRCUS OF CRIME**--

--BUT NOT BEFORE THE TROUPE HAD **FLEECED** IRIS' PARTY GUESTS, **PAUL SAME** AND **WINDA WESTER** AMONG THEM, OF THEIR VALUABLES.

THIS AFTERNOON, THE SHOW HAS HOISTED ITS TENTS IN **SKUDGE, PENNSYL-VANIA**...

Repercussions...!

C893

...AND IT'S IN THIS UNPREPOSSESSING LITTLE TOWN NEAR THE OHIO BORDER THAT THOSE ACTIONS, AND **OTHERS** NOT YET SO APPARENT, WILL BURST FORTH IN LITTLE RED BUDS OF **CONSEQUENCES.**

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE MOMENT YOU'VE ALL ***AWAITED!***

THE RINGMASTER'S CIRCUS ***PROUDLY*** PRESENTS THAT ***AMUSING ANOMALY--***

--THAT ***FREAK*** OF NATURE--

--THAT ***LOQUACIOUSLY*** MUTATED WATERFOWL--

--LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE ***ONE,*** THE ***ONLY--***

--HOWARD THE DUCK!!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

HE REALLY EXPECTS ME TO HELP HIM ROOK THE ***RUBES,*** HUH?

SOME ROTTEN JUDGE OF ***CHARACTER,*** ISN'T HE?

I'MA NO ***THINK*** SO, DUCK!

YOU SHAKE'A YOU' TAIL ***OUT*** THERE, OR I'MA PLUG' A YOU' ***HEAD,*** CAPISH?

IN ***BUCKETS,*** GAMBONNO.

YOU MAKE A VERY PERSUASIVE CASE FOR ***COWARDICE.***

:SIGH: INTO THE HARSH GLARE OF THE ***SPOTLIGHT*** WE GO--!

DIDJA HEAR THE ONE ABOUT THE PIANO THAT ATE *CAKE?*

HEY, ME *NEITHER!*

WHAT A COINKYDINK!

AND NOW, A LIST OF *FUNNY WORDS:*

:AHEM: OKAY LADLES AND GERMS, IT'S *HAPPY* TIME!!

EXCU-U-USE ME. HOCKEY PUCK! NO RESPECT. SMOCK! SMOCK! WONDERFUL WINO. NEVER GOT A DINNER.

:*HAW*: HE'S A RIOT! I'M GONNA BUST MY GUT *LAUGHIN'*!!

THAT'S ENOUGH HOWARD. *I'LL* TAKE THE MIKE, THANK YOU.

WHAD-DAYA *MEAN--?!*

THEY'RE JUST *WARMIN'* TO ME!

GIMME THAT ROD!

ATTENTION, EVERYBODY! *SCRAM!* FEROCIOUS LION ON THE LOOSE! KILLER BEAST!

NO KIDDING!! RUN!! FIRE!! THE TENT'S COLLAPSIN'! HUSTLE!! *SAVE* YOURSELVES!!

WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING? THIS IS LIFE OR DEATH!!

HE'S *FUNNY,* MOMMY!

ENOUGH, HOWARD! GOOD NIGHT!

GIVE HIM A *HAND,* FOLKS--HOWARD THE DUCK!!

WUMP

CLAP CLAP CLAP

AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE ***AUDIENCE-PARTICIPATION*** PORTION OF OUR SHOW!

KINDLY DIRECT YOUR GAZE TO THE SPINNING ***DISC*** ABOVE MY BRIM!

YOU ARE ABOUT TO TAKE A ***LONG*** JOURNEY...!

YOU FEEL YOURSELVES ***SINKING***...FALLING AWAY FROM YOUR BODIES... ***FAR*** AWAY...SO ***VERY*** FAR AWAY...!

THE ***DISC***, OF COURSE, IS AN ***HYPNOTIC*** DEVICE, CAPABLE OF MESMERIZING AN ENTIRE ***BIG TOP!***

AND GIVEN A PARTICULAR ***ETHICAL*** ORIENTATION, THE PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF SUCH A DEVICE ARE ***ENDLESS.***

'AT'SA RIGHT, PAISANO-- GIMME, GIMME ***GIMME!***

HOW FAR AWAY DIDJA ***SEND*** THESE CREEPS, BOSS?

WE'RE NOT ***STEALIN'*** THE LOOT-- THEY'RE MAKIN' ***DONATIONS!***

SURELY YOU'RE NOT ***COMPLAINING,*** CANNONBALL!

IT'S SO MUCH ***NICER*** WHEN THERE'S ***CO-OPERATION!***

THAT **CONCLUDES** OUR PERFORMANCE, FOLKS! GOOD EVENING-- AND DRIVE HOME **CAREFULLY!**

TROUPE! SHALL WE GATHER AND COUNT OUR --BLESSINGS?

AND WHEN THE FINAL TALLY IS **IN...**

ALMOST **TEN GRAND**--PLUS THE **GATE** AND ASSORTED FENCEABLE GOODS--!

NOT **BAD** FOR A SMALL-TOWN CROWD.

:waaugh: RINGO, YOU MUST **LOATHE** YOURSELF SOMETIMES!

WHAT--FOR RIFLING THE **RUCK**, YOU MEAN? :HAHA:

FOR **PERVERTIN'** THE INSTITUTION OF THE **CIRCUS**--

NAH!

--FOR EXPLOITIN' THE **KIDS** TO PILFER FROM THEIR **PARENTS**, FOR--

SILENCE, FOWL!

SNAT

WAAUK!

OH-OH-- LOOKS LIKE OUR FEATHERED FRIEND TOUCHED A **NERVE!**

NEVER AGAIN, HOWARD --IS THAT CLEAR?

YOU'RE **NEVER** TO VOICE SUCH SENTIMENTS IN MY PRESENCE **AGAIN!**

ACTUALLY... I FIGURED THIS WAS MY **ONLY SHOT!**

YOU, EH, *DO* RECALL YOUR PROMISE TO TURN ME *LOOSE* AFTER THE PERFORMANCE...

...*DON'T* YOU?

RINGO...?

YES, YES... THAT *WAS* MY INTENTION.

BUT YOU'VE PROVED SUCH AN EXCELLENT *DRAW*, HOWARD!

THE CROWD *LOVES* YOU-- AND I LOVED THE *CROWD*.

SO I'M *EXTENDING* OUR AGREEMENT-- *INDEFINITELY*.

WHA-A-AT?

NOW, *WAIT* A MINUTE, PAL-- I'M NOT *NAIVE*-- I DIDN'T *EXPECT* A SQUARE DEAL--

BUT-- AN *"INDEFINITE"* EXTENSION?! NO DICE!! THERE'S GOTTA BE ROOM FOR *NEGOTIATION!*

SH-H-H! DO NOT BE *ANGRY*, LITTLE ONE!

BE *GRATEFUL* THAT THE RINGMASTER HAS ALSO EXTENDED YOUR *LIFESPAN!*

HAH...?

AND THAT'S WHY THEY CALL THEM "VILLAINS": THEY LIE; THEY CHEAT; THEY ENDANGER LIFE, LIMB AND PROPERTY!

AND BEST OF ALL, THEY CAUSE UNTOLD SUFFERING AND MISERY...

...EVEN TO RELATIVELY **INNOCENT** PARTIES WHO, BY RIGHTS, SHOULD BE FEELING **NO PAIN.**

NO PARKING BUS STOP

BAB

MANY WILL BE TOUCHED (READ: "MAULED") BY THE RINGMASTER'S VILLAINY THIS NIGHT...

...BUT ONLY **ONE** WILL GO **MAD** AS A RESULT: **IGNATZ HUBLEY,** AGE 49, MARRIED, FATHER OF THREE, STEELWORKER, PRESENTLY **UN-EMPLOYED** AND ON HIS WAY TO **MONUMENTAL DRUNK.**

THAT DUCK JUST CRACKED ME **UP!** I NEVER LAUGHED SO HARD--!

;BURRP;- I'M TELLIN' YA--A MAN'S GOTTA HAVE A **LI'L** FUN-- BEEN HELL SINCE THE **MILL** SHUT DOWN SIX-- NO, **SEVEN** MONTHS AGO--ROTTEN, LOUSY--! BUT THAT **DUCK** PUT ME IN **STITCHES!**

I MUSTA' SEEN 43 DIF'RENT **BOSSES** IN THIS TOWN AN' THE NEXT, Y'KNOW, LOOKIN' FOR **WORK--?**

NUTHIN'! AN' THE WIFE'S ON MY BACK--

--BUGGIN' ME TA MOVE TA **PITTSBURGH**-- THE KIDS'RE SICK O' **SPANISH RICE** FOR DINNER SIX NIGHTS A WEEK-- CAN'T BLAME 'EM-- BUT IT DON'T MAKE 'EM EASY TO **LIVE** WITH--!

I BETTER BE GETTIN'-- **HOME.**

FOUR EIGHTY-FIVE, IGNATZ.

KLUNK

SURE AS **SHOOTIN,'** JAKE, HERE'S A--

;ULP;

'S EMPTY.

P-PUT 'ER ON MY **TAB**, JAKE-- HOKAY? --JUS' THIS ONCE-- A FAVOR FOR A **PAL**--?

SURE, IGNATZ, SURE.

IT AIN'T **POSSIBLE**... I WENT TA TH' **BANK**... THEN THE **CIRCUS**... DIDN'T BUY NUTHIN'...!

WHERE'D IT **GO**?? WHERE'D THE BLASTED **M-MONEY** GO?? JEEZO...!

TWO HUNNERT 'N' **ELEVEN** CLAMS-- TH' LAST OF OUR **SAVIN'S**--AW, JEEZ-- AW, NO--!

MAXINE'S GONNA **BRAIN** ME-- FOR LOSIN' THE LAST OF-- AW, JEEZ--!

WHAT'M I GONNA **DO**-- I CAN'T GO HOME **WITHOUT** IT-- JUICED AN' **BROKE**?! :SOB: SHE'LL **MURDER** ME--!

I GOTTA-- I GOTTA **FIND** IT-- GET IT **BACK**--

--OR MAYBE-- GET SOME **MORE**! YEAH, THAT'S IT!

I GOTTA GET SOME **MORE**--FOR MAXINE--AN' THE **KIDS**--BRING HOME THE **BACON**--!

I **HATE** SPANISH RICE!

*IGNATZ HALF-SWAGGERS, HALF-STAGGERS IN-TO THE DARKNESS OF THE SKUDGE EVENING... BARELY **NOTICING** THE SPORTSCAR THAT SCREECHES **TO** A HALT JUST **INCHES** FROM WHERE HE'D **STOOD**.*

*ALL OF WHICH GOES TO PROVE: BOOZE AND **TOMATO PASTE** DON'T MIX.*

DAMMIT, IRIS-- **STOP**!!

WE'VE DRIVEN ALMOST FOUR HUNDRED **MILES** ON SOME **HUNCH** OF YOURS--

--A HUNCH WHICH YOU WEFUSE TO **VEWBAWIZE,** INCIDENTAWWY--

--AND I, FOR ONE, WANNA KNOW **WHERE** WE'RE GOING--AND **WHY!**

ME **WIKE-WISE!**

IT'S NOT THAT WE DON'T **TWUST** YOU, IWIS--

--BUT **WINDA** AND I BOTH WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS **RADAR DEVICE** ON YOUR **DASHBOARD**--

--WHAT YOU'RE HOPING TO FIND IN **SKUDGE, PENNSYLVANIA**-- AND MOST OF ALL--

--**WHY** YOU DE-CLINED TO CALL THE **POLICE** AFTER RING-MASTER RIPPED OFF YOUR PARTY!

WELL--?!

OH, ALL RIGHT! ONE: IT'S AN ELECTRONIC **TRACKING DEVICE**, NOT RADAR. MY DAD'S **INDUSTRIAL SPIES** USED TO USE THEM.

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE FUN TO HAVE ONE INSTALLED IN THE CAR SO **I** COULD TRACK PEOPLE-- LIKE THE **RINGMASTER,** FOR INSTANCE.

AND THAT'S **EXACTLY** WHAT WE'VE BEEN **DOING.**

B-BUT-- WOULDN'T YOU HAVE HAD TO PLANT A **TRACER** ON HIS TRUCK TO--?

AND WHY WOULD YOU DO **THAT,** UNLESS--

--YOU **KNEW?!?**

IT'S **TRUE,** ISN'T IT? YOU **KNEW** THE RINGMASTER WAS GOING TO ROB YOUR GUESTS **BEFORE** YOU HIRED HIM TO PERFORM AT THE PARTY!

WELL, OF **COURSE,** SILLY!

DON'T YOU SEE--NOW WE GET THE ***EXCITEMENT*** OF BRINGING AN AUTHENTIC ***SUPER-VILLAIN*** BACK TO JUSTICE!

HE'S RIGHT HERE IN ***SKUDGE***, AND--

PAUL--WHAT'S ***WRONG?***

I DON'T FEEL LIKE LENGTHY EXPLANATIONS, IRIS. ***SORRY.***

BUT COUNT ME ***OUT*** ON THE MANHUNT.

I JUST HOPE YOU FIGURE ALL THIS "EXCITEMENT" WAS WORTH OUR ***FRIENDSHIP.***

PAUL! DON'T BE ***RIDICULOUS!*** WHERE WILL YOU GO? YOU HAVEN'T ANY ***MONEY***--!

YEAH.

NEITHER DID ***ANY*** OF YOUR GUESTS--BUT THEY GOT HOME.

I WILL, TOO!

THAT'S A ***CLUE***, IRIS. 'BYE.

;HMPH; I SUPPOSE ***YOU'VE*** MARKED ME AS CALLOUS AND JADED AND UNFEELING, ***TOO***, WINDA?

OH, ***NO...!***

FWANKWY, PAUL TAKES YOU MUCH MORE ***SEWIOUSWY*** THAN ***I*** DO. I WEGARD YOU AS JUST FOOWISHWY ***IMMATUWE.***

IN ***THAT*** CASE, DEARIE --***WALK*** HOME WITH YOUR ***BOYFRIEND!***

OUT!! GET OUT!!

WITH ***PWEASUWE***...BUT PAUL WAS SUPPOSEDWY ***YOUR*** BOYFWIEND, IRIS ...WEMEMBER?

HMMM...APPAWENTWY, SHE DOES ***NOT.***

VRROOM

BUT... THAT'S THE TWANSITOWY NATUME OF CONTEMPOWAWY WEWATIONSHIPS FOR YOU.

;SIGH;

MEANWHILE, BARELY A STONE'S THROW AWAY, AS THE **CROW** FLIES...

SO NOW IT'S **ON** TO THE NEXT TOWN--AND THE NEXT TENTFUL OF **PATSIES.**

GOTTA **HAND** IT TO RINGO--IT'S A **BRILLIANT** GIMMICK.

BUT THEN... SO WERE THE **SHOWERS** AT AUSCHWITZ.

RING MASTER

GOT A MINUTE, DUCKO?

ALL IN ALL, IT'S ASTOUNDING, THE IMPORTUNE PARABOLA ALONG WHICH MY LIFE WAS **WARPED...**

...AND THE FACT THAT I **STILL** CAN'T SEEM TO WORK UP ANY GUT-WRENCHING **EMOTION** OVER IT.

VERY **SCARY,** THAT.

Y'KNOW, YA SHOULDN'T OUGHTTA **SAID** THAT STUFF YA SAID TA THE RING-MASTER BEFORE.

YA MIGHT NOT KNOW IT, BUT YA **HURT** HIM REAL BAD, REAL **DEEP.**

YEAH, WELL--KIDNAPPING AND PUBLIC HUMILIATION HAVE A **SIMILAR** AFFECT ON **ME.**

NATCH, BUT--WELL, THE BOSS REALLY **LOVES** THE CIRCUS! HE GREW UP WITH IT, BACK IN **VIENNA** --'TIL THE **RATZIS** TOOK OVER AN' **OFFED** HIS MA AN' PA.

HE CAME OVER **HERE** WITH REAL HIGH HOPES, Y'KNOW --TA MAKE IT BIG WITH HIS **OWN** SHOW.

BUT AFTER TH' **WAR**, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A **SMALL** OUTFIT LIKE OURS TA **SURVIVE**, Y'KNOW?

ANYTHIN' LESS THAN THREE RINGS, FIFTY ELEPHANTS, AN' **76 TROMBONES** WAS CALLED A **CARNY.**

THAT'S WHY WE **TURNED** CROOKED IN TH' **FIRST** PLACE.

I **HATE** IT WHEN THEY GO **SINCERE** ON YOU.

HECK, WE'RE NOT EVEN **GOOD** AT IT! NEXT TA A **DR. DOOM** OR A **RED SKULL**, WE'RE LUDICROUS!!

HA!!

WHAP

;HYUK; EVERY TIME WE RUN UP AGAINST SPIDER-MAN OR DAREDEVIL OR THE **HULK**--

--WE GET THE LIVIN' **SPIT** BEAT OUT OF US!! ;HAW;

;NNGH; IT'S **SWELL** YOU CAN WAX **PHILOSOPHICAL** ABOUT IT.

WAX?

I DUNNO... ANYHOW, TRY NOT TA JUDGE US TOO **HARSH**, Y'KNOW?

PLOP

WE SEEN HARD TIMES, **TOO.**

UH-HUH.

'COURSE, I WOULDN'T WANNA **TEST** THAT ARGUMENT ON THE PEOPLE WHOSE **PELF** YOU PILFERED.

CANNONBALL...?

HE DIDN'T HEAR--OR DIDN'T **WANT** TO.

NO BIG DEAL. THERE ARE THINGS I NEED MORE THAN **REPARTEE** AT THE MOMENT.

SOME **ANSWERS** WOULD BE NIFTY.

WHAT'S **BEV*** DOING MARRIED TO **DR. BONG**--AND IS SHE **ENJOYING** IT? WILL I **LIVE** TO HEAR HER UNCLE LEE'S **BUSINESS** PROPOSITION? IS THERE LIFE AFTER **DINNER?**

*BEVERLY SWITZLER, HOWARD'S FORMER ROOMMATE.--STEVE.

ALL OF WHICH, IN A ROUNDABOUT FASHION, LEADS US **BACK** TO--

--THE **BACON**, RALPH! THE LONG **PORK!**

:HIC:

I GOTTA BRING IT **HOME!** I GOTTA **PROVIDE!**

JUST GIMME THAT DOUGH AN' LEMME **BLOW**-- PLEASE?

I DON' WANNA HAVETA :HIC: **HURT** YA, RALPH.

SO IGNATZ HUBLEY HAS FOUND WHAT HE **BELIEVES** IS THE SOLUTION TO HIS FINANCIAL REVERSES.

NO SUCH LUCK...

MAYBE I CAN **HITCH** BACK TO CLEVELAND...!

I DON'T CARE...AS LONG AS I PUT ENOUGH **MILES** BETWEEN MY SELF AND **IRIS.**

...FOR AN EM-BITTERED **PAUL SAME** IS ABOUT TO **INTRUDE** ON IGNATZ'S SORRY STICK-UP.

TIME TO **ROLL**, DUCKO! HOP IN!

I GET TO RIDE IN THE **FRONT SEAT??**

WITH YOU AND **RING-MASTER??** GOSH!!

AREN'T YOU AFRAID YOU'LL **SPOIL** ME, GUYS?

I PREFER TO RUN THAT **RISK**, FOWL...

...RATHER THAN LET YOU OUT OF MY **SIGHT.**

RRROOMM

"SPEAKIN' OF **SIGHT, BOSS,**" CANNONBALL QUIPS, "I JUST TOOK A GANDER AT THE **FUEL** GAUGE. **ZIP!**"

"THEN LET US **ZIP** TO A SERVICE STATION, FOOL, BEFORE HIT-TING THE **INTERSTATE,**" RINGMASTER RESPONDS.

PERFECT! THEY DON'T EVEN **SUSPECT** I'M ON THEIR TAIL!

RINGMASTER CIRCUS

YROOMM

WHILE, BACK IN THE HEART OF **SKUDGE...**

SOONEW OR WATER, IWIS OR PAUL WILL **WETURN...** I HOPE AND PWAY FEWVENTWY.

IN THE **INTEWIM,** HOWEVEW...

...I'M FEEWING STWANGEWY WIKE A **POWICE DECOY,** MM-HM...!

I WONDEW IF...OH, DEAW.

♪ THE NIGHT THEY DROVE OL' DIXIE DOWN-- ♪

♪ --AN' ALLA BELLS WERE-- ♪

WHOOPS! HI, DERE!

HEWWO...AND GOODBYE.

I'M **LANCE**-- I'M **BOMBED**-- AN' I'M IN **LOVE** AT FIRS' SIGHT! HOW 'BOUT **YOU?**

I'M WINDA. AND I'M **WEVOLTED.**

AW, DON' BE **SCARED!** I'M A **NICE GUY**-- YOU'RE **ALONE**-- I MEAN, SHUCKS!

C'MON, I GOT A BOTTLE BACK AT **MY** PLACE--!

NO, PWEASE --WET **GO!** I'M WAITING FOR--

AAAH, DON' HAND ME **THAT** CR--

:OWWW:

SKRAACH

HEY, WHAT'RE YA--?!?

Y-YOU BROKE THE S-**SKIN**-- I'M B-**BLEEDIN'**--!

YOU ARE **NOT** GONNA GET AWAY WITH THIS, GIRLIE.

SO THE LOCAL LUNATIC DRAGS A TERRIFIED WINDA INTO THE **SHADOWS** AS THE RINGMASTER'S **SEMI** PULLS UP TO THE PUMPS AT A FATEFULLY **FAMILIAR** FILLING STATION.

AND WHEN, AFTER 40 FULL **SECONDS**, A SMILING **AT-TENDANT** FAILS TO APPEAR...

THE **SIGN** SAYS, "OPEN 24 HOURS."

BUT PERHAPS THEY MEAN PER **WEEK**--

--AND **LESS** IF THERE'S SOME-THING SEXY ON **TELEVISION.**

WE SHALL **SEE.**

SNEERING, THE VILLAIN DISAPPEARS INTO THE OFFICE... AND DOES NOT **RE-EMERGE.**

I DON'T **GET** IT, DUCK! WHAT'S HOLDIN' HIM **UP?**

MAYBE HE'S TRYING TO BARGAIN THE GUY DOWN ON A CAN OF 30-WEIGHT **MOUSTACHE WAX.**

NAH... HE'S TOO **NATURALLY** UNCTUOUS. THEY MUST BE DE-BATING THE **PANAMA CANAL.**

OR... NOW, LOOK **HERE...!**

SHADDUP!!

REALLY... ALL **I** WANTED WAS DIRECTIONS TO THE MAIN **HIGHWAY...!**

YOU SHADDUP, TOO! THE **BACON,** RALPH-- **GET IT!!**

DON'T **BUDGE,** RALPH. I REPEAT, SIR: LOOK **HERE!**

YOU'RE ABOUT TO **EMBARK** UPON A LONG--

--JOURNEY! YEAH, I'M ABOUT TO--

--JUST LIKE AT TH' CIRCUS-- JUST LIKE--

JEEZ-- JEEZ!! IT WAS YOU!!

YOU STOLE MY BACON!!

BA-

THAT WAS A GUNSHOT, DUCK! SOMETHIN'S WRONG IN THERE!!

RINGMASTER

WHADDAYA KNOW --HE CAN THINK ANALYTICALLY!

H-HOLY CRIPES-- THE CANNON GUY-- AN' THE FUNNY LI'L DUCK!

DUCK?

HOWARD!

AWRIGHT, YOU MUGS--WHAT'S THE HAPS?

PAUL!

AN' AWW, LOOK! POOR RINGO'S HAT GOT KILLED!

TH-THIS'S TOO CRAZY! THERE'S TOO MANY OF 'EM! I DUNNO WHERE TA POINT TH' GUN! I'M ;HIC; GETTIN' OUTTA--

PANIC-STRICKEN, IGNATZ LUNGES FOR THE GARAGE DOOR--

--AT THE PRECISE MOMENT IRIS CHOOSES TO MAKE HER DRAMATIC ENTRANCE.

THUMP

BAM

THE IMPACT OF THEIR COLLISION SENDS IGNATZ SPRAWLING ...CLUTCHING THE GUN TOO TIGHTLY.

AND THE **BULLET** UNFORTUNATELY FINDS A **TARGET:**

PAUL...?

SOMETIME **LATER...**

YEAH, THAT'S HOW IT BREAKS **DOWN,** LEE:

TWO SHATTERED KNEECAPS FOR **HUBLEY...** RINGMASTER GETS **AWAY...**

...WINDA'S UNDER HEAVY **SEDATION** WITH LACERATIONS, BRUISES, AND **TRAUMA...**

...AND THEY'RE "NOT SURE" YET ABOUT **PAUL.**

OTHER THAN **THAT,** EVERYTHING'S FINE.

ALL RIGHT-- STAY **PUT!** I'LL DRIVE UP FROM CLEVELAND TO FETCH YOU ALL!

WHAT?! BECAUSE I'M YOUR **FRIEND,** THAT'S WHY!

HANG UP! I'M ON MY **WAY!**

HE PROBABLY **IS,** TOO-- MY FRIEND. THE **OTHER** BEVERLY SWITZLER WAS. I--

WELL-- WHO LET **YOU** OUT?

THERE, UH... WASN'T ANY CHARGE THEY COULD **HOLD** ME ON.

FIGURES.

YOU KNOW, I'M NOT **HAPPY** ABOUT... I **LIKED** PAUL... **AND** HIS ARTWORK... I **DID** WANT TO BE HIS PATRON...!

WINDA WAS RIGHT ...I'M VERY IMMATURE.

IF THAT'S ALL SHE SAID, YOU GOT OFF **EASY!**

LISTEN **CLOSE,** IRIS, 'CAUSE HERE'S A LESSON OBVIOUSLY NEVER **TAUGHT** YOU:

ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

ALL YOU HAIRLESS APES SEEM SO **SELF-OBSESSED,** I'M NOT **SURPRISED** IT NEVER OCCURRED TO YOU--!

BUT MESS WITH PEOPLE'S **LIVES**--AND FATE EVENTUALLY MESSES **BACK!**

YOU'LL GET **YOURS,** IRIS.

NEXT **I'M NOT NEGATIVE... I'M ANGRY** (I THINK)

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

THE FEATHERED FURY SEIZES THE DAY WITH ALL EIGHT FINGERS!

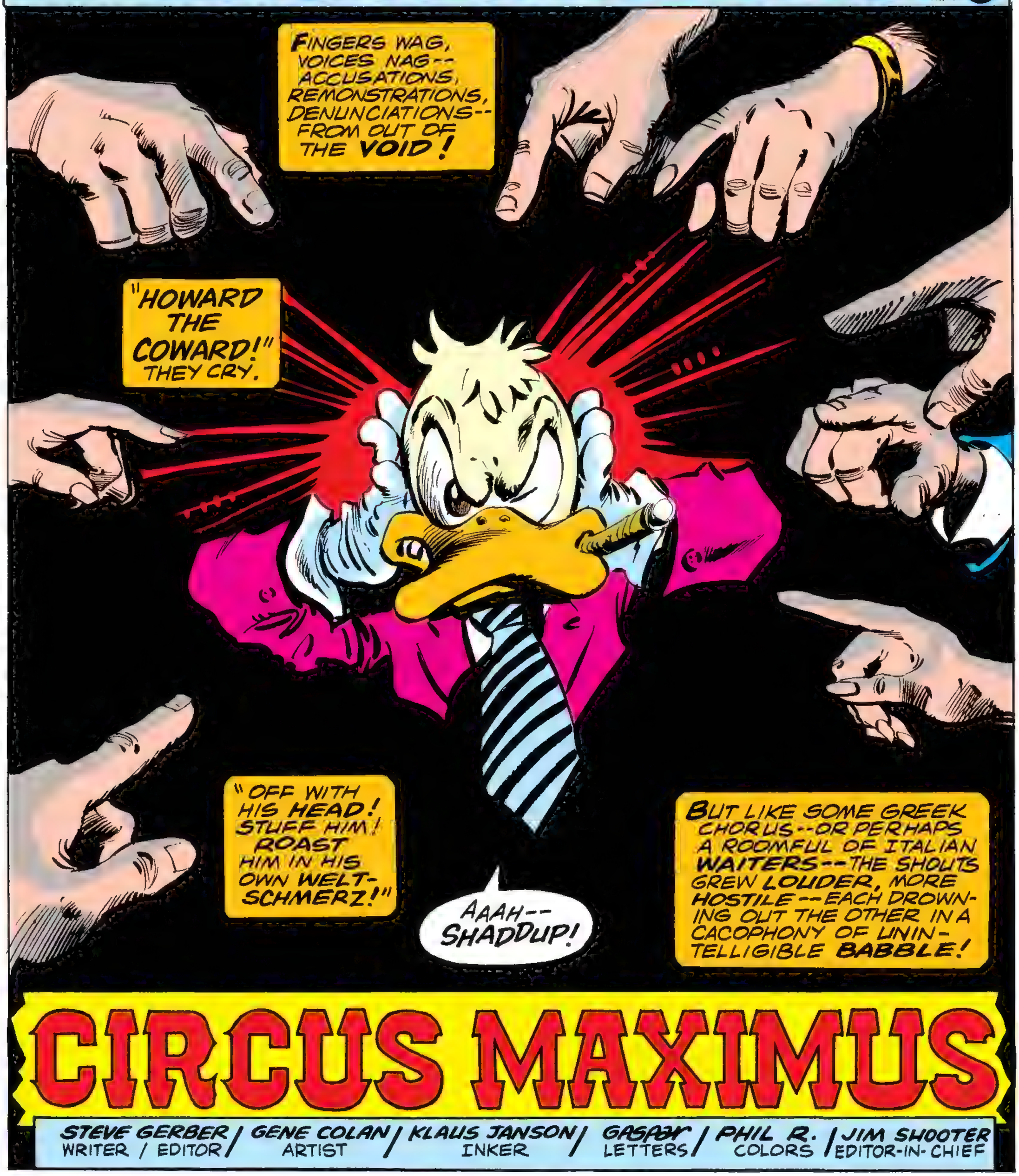
OKAY, RINGMASTER! YOU'VE KIDNAPPED ME, BEATEN ME, HUMILIATED ME--

--NOW EAT MY GLOVE!

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™



CIRCUS MAXIMUS

STEVE GERBER / WRITER / EDITOR | GENE COLAN / ARTIST | KLAUS JANSON / INKER | GASPAR / LETTERS | PHIL R. / COLORS | JIM SHOOTER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ORDER IN THE COURT!

I SAY, ORDER IN THE COURT!

BIBLE

DON'T YOU WORRY, AND DON'T YOU CRY! IF THIS DUCK'S GUILTY, YOU'LL SEE HIM FRY!

I'M BEVERLY SWITZLER, YOUR MAGISTRATE-- AND IF YOU DID BAD, DUCKY-- IT'S NOW TOO LATE--

--'CAUSE HERE COME DE JUDGE, HERE COME DE JUDGE, HERE COME DE JUDGE--!

FIRST KARMIC KOURT IS NOW IN SESSION!

HOWARD, YOU'VE BEEN CHARGED WITH TERMINAL NEGATIVISM! HOW DO YOU PLEAD?

NOT GUILTY-- BY REASON OF SANITY.

DON'T GET CUTE, SUCKER-- I'LL HOLD YOU IN CONTEMPT.

COME TO THINK OF IT, I ALREADY DO!

IS THE STATE OF MIND READY TO PRESENT ITS CASE, MR. PERSECUTOR?

WE ARE INDEED, YOUR HONORESS, THOUGH FRANKLY--

--IT HARDLY SEEMS WORTH THE BOTHER!

THE STATE HAS BUT ONE QUESTION TO PUT TO THE DEFENDANT.

I ASK YOU, FOWL, TO DESCRIBE THIS OBJECT I'M HOLDING!

UHM... IT'S ABOUT FOUR INCHES TALL, CYLINDRICAL, PROBABLY COMPOSED OF SILICON DIOXIDE, OR...

IN LAYMEN'S TERMS, PLEASE!

IT'S A GLASS O' WATER-- HALF-EMPTY!

THE PROSECUTION RESTS, YOUR HONORESS!

GOOD FOR YOU!

HAH!

HUMP

SENTIENT BEINGS OF THE JURY, YOU'VE HEARD THE EVIDENCE BROUGHT BEFORE THIS COURT--

--AND I'M CONFIDENT YOU FOUND IT AS INCRIMINATING AS I DID!

HAVE YOU REACHED A VERDICT?

WE HAVE, YOUR HONORESS.

WE FIND THE DEFENDANT--

GUILTY AS HELL!!

THANKS, GUYS. I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T LET ME DOWN!

>TSK!< I SUPPOSE YOU REALIZE, DUCKY, THAT THAT VERDICT CARRIES A PENALTY OF LIFE IMPRISON-MENT IN YOUR OWN RUT--!

WAAAUGH!

WAITAMINIT, TOOTS! DON'T I EVEN GET TO PRESENT A DEFENSE?!

>TEE HEE< OH, DON'T BE SILLY! WHAT POSSIBLE--?

JUST GIMME A SECOND-- I'LL THINK O' SOMETHING!

FAT CHANCE.

YEAH? WELL, LISTEN, SWEETS-- MY LIFE HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN A BED O' ROSES SINCE WE SPLIT UP!

YOU'VE BEEN MARRIED-- HAPPILY, I PRESUME, TO DR. BONG-- WHILE I'VE BEEN MIXIN' IT UP WITH KILLER SOAP BUBBLES, CITRUS-BRAINED DECENCY FREAKS, AN' THE CIRCUS OF CRIME!

IT'S A CASE O' SENSORY OVERLOAD! EVEN YOU HAIRLESS APES HAVE YOUR UPS AN' DOWNS-- YOUR ACTIVE AN' PASSIVE MODES--!

TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON!!

YOU'RE HANGING YOURSELF, DUCKY. YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT!

I'VE BEEN OUTTA TOUCH WITH MY *EMOTIONS*! I'VE LET MYSELF BE VICTIMIZED! IT'S *TRUE*!

THE *CHAOS* FINALLY *GOT* TO ME!

AN' I JUST-- STOPPED-- FIGHTING--!

AH-HA! THEN YOU'RE *CHANGING* YOUR PLEA--?

DON'T BE A *SAP*, TOOTS! IT JUST MEANS-- THE BATTLE'S BEEN GOIN' ON *INSIDE*!

THE OUTSIDE WORLD JUST HADDA *WAIT*-- 'TIL I COULD DECIDE HOW I *FELT* ABOUT IT!

AN' NOW *I KNOW*--!

I'M NOT NEGATIVE--

I'M ANGRY!

YA HEAR ME, WORLD-- NO MORE MR. NICE DUCK!!

FROM NOW ON-- IT'S AN *EYE* FOR A *TOOTH*--

--AN' A TOOTH FOR A *TOENAIL!!*

IRIS-- QUICK-- GIMME A *HAND!*

SNAP OUT OF IT, DUCKO-- C'MON-- *WAKE UP!!*

YOU'RE AMONG *FRIENDS!*

HUH-- WHA'-- WHO--?

THAT MUST'VE BEEN ONE HELL OF A *NIGHTMARE*, PAL. *NOBODY* FORGETS *MY* UGLY MUG.

IT'S *LEE SWITZLER*, HOWARD--HE ARRIVED WHILE YOU WERE *ASLEEP!*

LEE? THEN... WE'RE IN *CLEVELAND..?*

WORSE: *SKUDGE, PENNSYLVANIA.*

REMEMBER? YOU CALLED AND ASKED ME TO *DRIVE UP?*

IT'S... COMIN' BACK TO ME.

LISTEN--I'M NONE TOO CLEAR ABOUT IT, *MY-SELF!*

WE'RE IN THE LOCAL *HOSPITAL*, THOUGH--AND YOUR CHUMS, *PAUL* AND *WINDA*, ARE JUST DOWN THE HALL!

DOCTORS SAY THERE'S NO *CHANGE*. IT'S STILL A WAITING GAME.

FOR YOU, MAYBE.

BUT I'VE BEEN WAITIN' TOO *LONG*--

--EVER SINCE I LOST YOUR *NIECE!*

RARITAN, I'M GONNA GIVE YA A CHANCE TO REDEEM YOURSELF! YOU WERE ALL HOT TO CAPTURE THE RINGMASTER WHEN YOU THOUGHT HE WAS A PUSH-OVER--!

I KNOW--!

AND IT'S MY FAULT PAUL GOT SHOT AND WINDA WAS BEATEN UP.*

*LAST ISSUE.--S.G.

UH-HUH. SO HOW D'YA FEEL ABOUT CHASIN' VILLAINS WHEN YA KNOW HOW DANGEROUS THEY CAN BE?

Y-YOU MEAN-- YOU AND I-- TOGETHER--?

YOU'RE ON-- PARTNER!

"ASSOCIATE," IRIS--LEAVE IT AT THAT!

GET THIS STRAIGHT, LADY-- I DON'T LIKE YOU.

BUT I NEED YOU-- AN' YOUR CONSCIENCE NEEDS ME!

IF WE CAN CO-OPERATE ON THAT BASIS, SWELL! IF NOT--!

I GUESS I CAN MANAGE!

GOOD!

UH, LEE...?

SAY NO MORE, DUCKO. I'LL KEEP THE VIGIL. YOU KEEP IN TOUCH!

THE RISING SUN AT THEIR BACKS, THE **HEIRESS** AND THE **WATERFOWL** SET OFF ON THEIR MISSION OF **VENGEANCE**...

SO, ANYWAY, AFTER **MOTHER** DIED, I WAS SHUNTED OFF TO A **BOARDING SCHOOL** AND TOLD NOT TO COME BACK--

--TILL I'D MASTERED LATIN, PHYSICS, THE FLUTE, ENGLISH LIT, GYMNASTICS, TENNIS, AND THE **SOCIAL GRACES**.

FATHER-DEAR ACTUALLY PLANNED TO MARRY ME OFF AS PART OF A **MERGER** DEAL.

IRIS... IS THIS REALLY **NECESSARY**?

SO YOU WERE THE PRODUCT OF A **MEDIEVAL** HOME-- SO **WHAT**?

LORD, YOU MUST'VE BEEN HATCHED FROM A **HARD-BOILED EGG!**

I ONLY WANTED YOU TO **UNDER-STAND** A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ME--ABOUT WHERE MY **MANIPULATIVE** STREAK COMES FROM!

SAVE IT. TELL ME ABOUT THE **TRACKING** DEVICE.

IT PICKS UP A SIGNAL FROM A **TRACER** I PLANTED ON RINGMASTER'S **CIRCUS TRUCK**. SEE THAT **BLIP**?

YEAH...?

THAT'S THE TRUCK! MY GUESS IS--THEY'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR **CLEVELAND!**

NO KIDDIN'? I WAS BEGINNIN' TO WONDER IF I'D EVER **SEE** THE PLACE AGAIN!

...AN' FOR THAT MATTER, WHY I'D **WANT** TO.

TOO MANY **MEMORIES** FLOATIN' AROUND THAT TOWN!

MOST OF THOSE MEMORIES--THE PLEASANT ONES--CENTER ABOUT LEE SWITZLER'S AFOREMENTIONED NIECE--

--WHO NOW RESIDES HALF A WORLD AWAY, IN THE ISOLATED HIMALAYAN RETREAT OF HER HUSBAND--

TRULY A TERPSICHOREAN TRIUMPH, MY DEAREST! DANCE ON! FROLIC! CAVORT!

NEEZ!

--THE MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR BONG!!

NEEZ!

--BUT I ;gasp; HAVEN'T HAD ANY APPLAUSE EITHER-- Y'KNOW?

;Pant; I--I THINK-- I'M CAVORTED OUT, LESTER! ;Puff!;

I HAVEN'T ;GASP!; HAD SO MUCH EXERCISE ;mmph; IN YEARS--

AND I HAVE TO ADMIT-- I LIKE IT.

CLAP

CLAP!

YOU ARE HAPPY WITH ME, THEN, BEVERLY?

SHUCKS! YOU FOUND ME OUT!

I CONFESS! I'M GLAD YOU COERCED ME INTO MARRIAGE!

THEN YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO LEARN MY PLAN FOR WORLD CONQUEST IS PROCEEDING APACE, MY DARLING!

SOON WE SHALL RULE THIS *PLANET* TOGETHER, AND I SHALL REGAIN MY *DIGNITY*--

--BY *SLAYING* THE ONLY CREATURE EVER TO *THWART* MY AMBITIONS!

THINK OF IT, DEAREST-- *HOWARD THE DUCK*--DEAD BY MY HAND!!

CLEVELAND, SOME HOURS LATER!

ND BANK

ARE YOU *SERIOUS*? YOU--AND A *HUMAN BEING*?!

IRIS, YOU'RE MAKIN' ME SORRY I EVER OPENED MY *BILL*!

WHAT'RE WE *STOPPIN'* FOR?

A LADY *NEVER* WEARS A FORMAL GOWN INTO *BATTLE*, HOWARD.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL MAKE IT *SNAPPY*.

Hmmm. WHICH *REMINDS* ME--!

ANOTHER STOP, ANOTHER PURCHASE!

A *CAMERA*? WHAT ON EARTH *FOR*?

FOR ABOUT *300 BUCKS*! LUCKY YOU CARRY AMERICAN EXPRESS!

CAMER

THEIR BRISK SHOPPING SPREE CONCLUDED--

--HOWARD AND IRIS PUSH ON TO THE LOCAL FAIRGROUNDS!

THERE'S THE *RINGMASTER*! WE'RE JUST IN TIME FOR THE *MATINEE*!

KEEP YOUR *HEAD* DOWN!

YEAH! YEAH!

INTO THE *TENT*, LADIES AND GENTS! STEP RIGHT ALONG! DON'T PUSH! DON'T CROWD!

THERE'S THRILLS APLENTY FOR *EVERYONE*!

EVEN THE FEISTY **FOWL** CAN'T DISPUTE **THAT** CLAIM...

ONCE UNDER THE **BIG TOP**, HE AND IRIS--LIKE THE REST OF THE CROWD--

--FIND THEMSELVES **BEGUILED** BY THE GARISH **FLAMBOYANCE**, THE SINEWY AND EXOTIC **PHYSICALITY** OF THE CIRCUS SPECTACLE.

BUT HOWARD ALSO SEES SOMETHING **MORE**--A WEIRD **METAPHOR** FOR THE RECENT EVENTS IN HIS LIFE!

THE GRACEFUL **ELUSIVENESS** IN THE TWISTS AND LEAPS OF THE ACROBATIC **GAMBONNOS**--!

THE MEANINGLESS **BOMBAST** OF **CANNONBALL**-- THE LETHALLY SEDUCTIVE DANCE OF **PRINCESS PYTHON**-- THE IMPLICIT **DECEPTION** IN THE **CLOWN'S** PAINTED GRIN--!

AND, OF COURSE, THE OMNIPRESENT **RINGMASTER**, THE GUIDING FORCE, WHETHER IT BE **FATE** OR THE PROCLIVITIES OF THE **PSYCHE**!

EACH HAS ITS **ANALOG** IN THE WORLD **OUTSIDE** THIS TARPAULIN COVERTURE...!

ALL THIS FLASHES THROUGH THE DUCK'S MIND IN AN **INSTANT**!

AND THAT IS FORTUNATE!

FOR AS THE GRAND FINALE ENDS, THE CIRCUS OF CRIME'S MOST ASTOUNDING ACT BEGINS--!

THE RINGMASTER'S HYPNOTIC DISC SPINS ITS SPELL--

HIDE YOUR EYES, RARITAN! THIS IS IT!

--MAKING EASY PICKIN'S OF THE MESMERIZED CROWD!

SO THAT'S WHAT THE CAMERA WAS FOR!

UH-HUH. ANSEL ADAMS, I'M NOT--

--BUT WE'RE AFTER EVIDENCE HERE, NOT ART!

SNAP

FAREWELL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AND CHILDREN OF ALL AGES-- HOME YOU GO--

--WITH OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE!

YOU'RE A BUSINESS-WOMAN, IRIS.

WHAT'S THE FAIR MARKET VALUE OF GRATITUDE?

SNAP

SNAP

-SIGH- LESS THAN I'D HOPED-- BUT MORE THAN I EXPECTED! ALL IN ALL-- EH?

WHAT'S THAT? WHO'S THERE--?!

WELL, WELL, **WELL**--IRIS RARITAN AND MY FOOLISH FEATHERED FRIEND! WHAT BRINGS **YOU**--?

NOTHIN' MUCH. I WANT TO REMEMBER MY **KIDNAPPING** IN **PICTURES.**

GOT SOME NICE **SHOTS,** TOO. THE **COPS'LL** LOVE 'EM.

I IMAGINE THEY **WOULD!** BUT WE DO NOT **ALLOW** CAMERAS ON THE PREMISES, HOWARD. STRICT **POLICY!**

VERY BAD FOR SALES OF OUR SOUVENIR **PROGRAMS!**

OH, SURE...!

YEAH, WELL--NO BIG DEAL. I SORTA **FIGURED** WE'D HAVETA **HAGGLE** A LITTLE, RIGHT, IRIS?

VERY WELL--AS LONG AS YOU **UNDERSTAND.**

I **TOLDJA** BEFORE, DUCK-- **WE** DESERVE SOME SYMPATHY, TOO!

BUT YA DIDN'T **LISSEN!**

NOW I GOTTA **RAM** YOUSE INTA TH' **GROUND!!**

HEY, RUBE!!

AT THE SOUND OF THAT TRADITIONAL CIRCUS **CALL TO ARMS,** CANNON-BALL LAUNCHES HIMSELF AT THE SEEMINGLY POWERLESS PAIR.

I BEG TO DIFFER, BULLET-BRAIN! WHAT YOU GOTTA DO, IS--

WHAT?? WAIT! I CAN'T SEE!!

--NEVER MIND. YOU DID IT.

AAARGH

CLANG!

OKAY-- NEXT!

THAT WOULD BE ME, LITTLE ONE--

"AND I CAN PROMISE YOU A MOST EXCRUCIATING DEATH IN HIS COILS, HOWARD...

WAAUGH

--AND MY PRECIOUS!

"...ALL THE AGONY DUE ONE WHO HAS REPAID MY KINDNESS WITH BETRAYAL!"

AH, THE JOYS OF *SIBLING RIVALRY!*

HOW 'BOUT IF I LET YOU SETTLE THIS BETWEEN *YOUR-SELVES?*

I'MA ROLL'A RIGHT *THROUGH* 'ER, VITO!

SAYS YOU! *I'MA* GONNA BREAK'A HER *FACE* WITH MY FEET!!

SHLAMP!

PRETTY CLASS *MOVES* THERE, HONEY PIE! YOU DEFINITELY POSSESSES PANACHE, CHUTZPAH, AN' *HOT LEGS!*

ERGO--ALAS, OH, WOE, AND *RATS!*

THERE IS DEFINITELY THINGS I WOULD RATHER DO THAN *CANING* YOU!

IN THAT CASE, BOZO--YOU SHOULDN'T'VE PINNED ALL YOUR HOPES ON ***ONE WHEEL!***

EE-YIPES!!

I TRIED TO BE YOUR ***FRIEND,*** LITTLE ONE.

REMEMBER? I DID NOT WISH YOU TO ***DIE***. I FOUND YOU SO ***CUTE***--!

≠SOB≠ MY ***NOSE***--OH, MY ***NOSE***--!

HOW SAD THAT--

CHOMP

GOWWTCH!!

YEAH. IT'S A DAMN ***SHAME!***

HEARING ITS MISTRESS' ANGUISHED ***CRIES***--

--HER EVER-FAITHFUL PET ***RELEASES*** THE FOWL AND SLINKS TO HER SIDE!

I AM MASTER NOT ONLY OF THIS ***CIRCUS***-- BUT OF MEN'S ***WILLS!!*** NONE CAN RESIST--

SO NOW IT'S DOWN TO YOU 'N' ME, RINGO-- UNLESS YOU CARE TO ***SURRENDER!***

CAPITULATE TO A ***DUCK?!?*** ARE YOU ***MAD??***

WUMP

THAT'S *DEBATABLE* AT BEST-- *TURKEY!!*

MAYBE NOBODY HAD A GOOD ENOUGH *REASON* TO BEFORE!!

MAYBE YA JUST NEVER *MET* ANYBODY WHO WAS *FED UP* ENOUGH--

--WITH LETTIN' THE REST O' THE WORLD WALK ALL *OVER* 'IM!!

HOWARD--THAT'S *ENOUGH!* YOU'VE MADE YOUR *POINT!* AND BESIDES--

I'M NOT SO SURE *I* SHOULDN'T BE THE ONE LYING THERE, TAKING--!

LET'S *SPLIT*-- OKAY?

THE DUCK GROWLS SOMETHING IN REPLY-- AND OFFERS ONLY *TOKEN* RESISTANCE WHEN IRIS PLUCKS HIM FROM THE RING-MASTER'S PROSTRATE FORM.

HIS ANGER IS HARDLY *QUELLED*--

BUT THERE ARE OTHER, MORE *CON-SERVATIVE* OUTLETS FOR IT.

LATER...

SO-- WHAT'S THE *PROG-NOSIS?*

Phone

FAIR. LEE SAYS THEY'LL BOTH *LIVE.*

SO *OUR* NEXT MOVE IS--

APART. YOU TAKE THE FILM TO THE *FUZZ*--

--THEN HEAD BACK TO *SKUDGE.*

ME--I'M GONNA WADDLE AROUND TOWN AWHILE-- NURSE THOSE *MEMORIES*--

--OR MAYBE JUST TRY AN' *ABORT* 'EM.

NEXT *COOKING WITH GAS!*

STILL ONLY 35¢

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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AN OFFBEAT MASTERPIECE THAT WE CAN ONLY CALL--

COOKING WITH GAS!

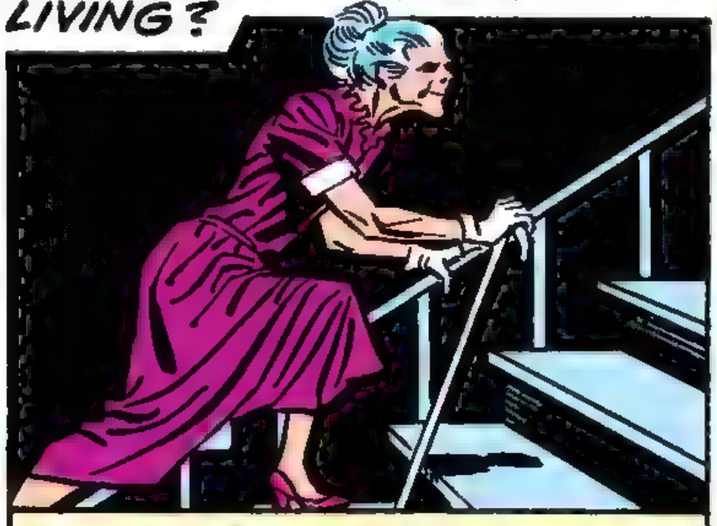
NEW HEIGHTS OF INSANITY! NEW DEPTHS OF INSIGHT! FROM SAME OL' MARVEL!

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!

COOKING WITH GAS

EVER WONDER WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO ENCOUNTER A TALKING DUCK-- AND DECIDE TO GO ON **LIVING?**

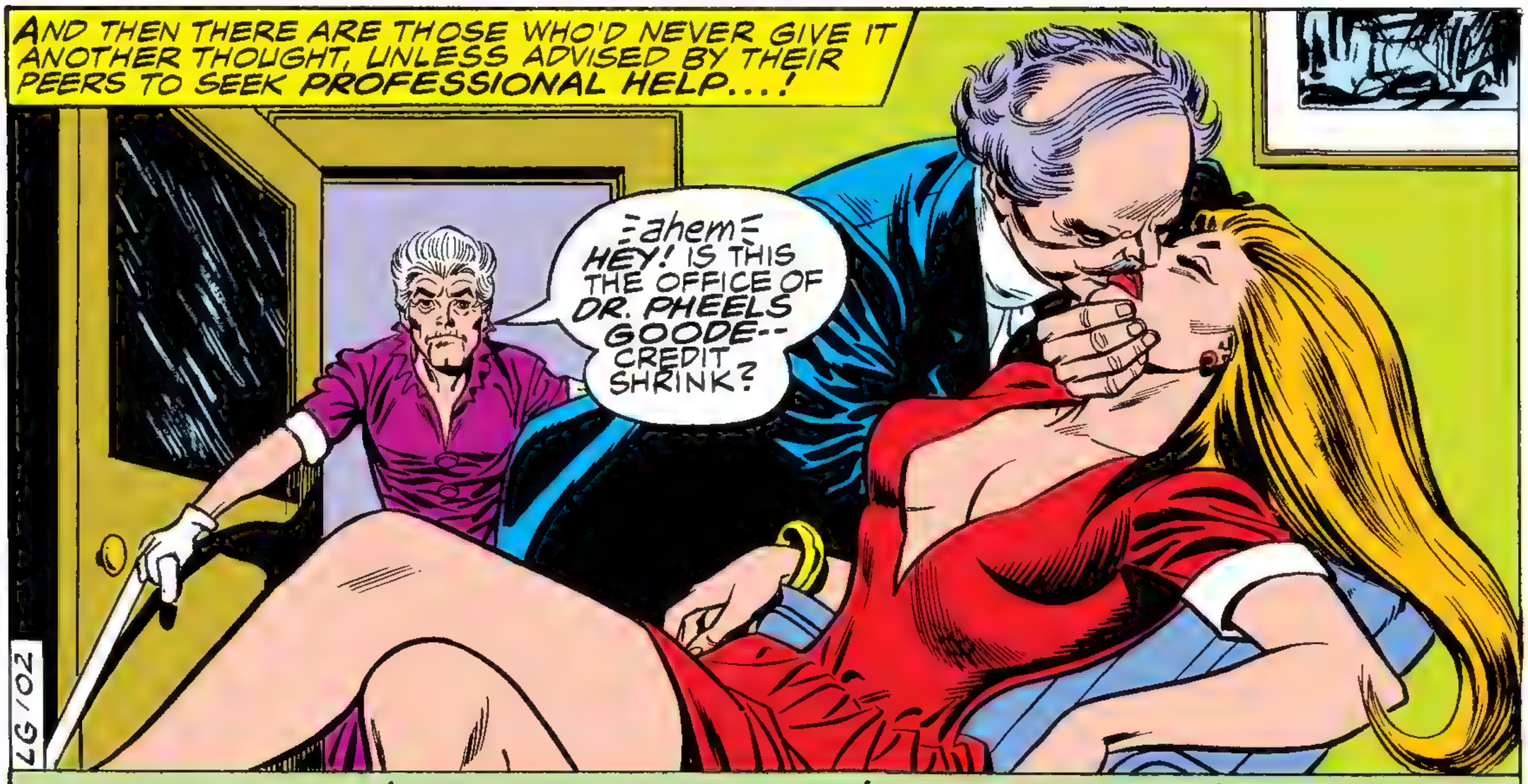


SOME MIGHT DEEM IT A **RELIGIOUS** EXPERIENCE-- A DOUBLE SCOOP OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

IN OTHERS, IT MIGHT TRIGGER A NEW SENSE OF **WONDER** AT THE MYSTERIES AND ABERRATIONS OF THE UNIVERSE.

YET OTHERS MIGHT COME AWAY WITH AN AGONIZED APPRECIATION OF THE PLIGHT OF **MINORITIES.**

AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO'D NEVER GIVE IT ANOTHER THOUGHT, UNLESS ADVISED BY THEIR PEERS TO SEEK **PROFESSIONAL HELP...!**



MARV WOLFMAN GUEST PLOTTER | **CARMINE INFANTINO** PENCILER | **FRANK GIACOIA** INKER | PATTERSON, LETTERS GLYNIS W., COLORS

MARY SKRENES, DIALOGUE * **STEVE GERBER**, EDITOR * **J. SHOOTER**, CONSULTING ED.

YES, I, EH-- JUST DO A LITTLE **DENTISTRY** ON THE SIDE-- MY SECRETARY'S **MOLARS**--!

VERY INTERESTING! WANT A **LOOK?**

MAKE LIKE THE **GREEN GIANT** AND CAN THE **CORN**, DOC!

I'M HERE ON **BUSINESS!** YOU GONNA **ANALYZE** ME, OR AIN'T YA?

=ahem= YES, OF COURSE.

=TEE HEE=

INSTANT ANALYSIS ON CREDIT IS MY **SPECIALTY**, MRS. ...?

THAT'S **MIZ!** "MRS." IS JUST MY **CODE NAME!**

NATURALLY. PLEASE ASSUME A **SUPINE**--

I NEVER ASSUME **NOTHIN'!**

IN MY RACKET, THAT'S A QUICK WAY TO **GET DEAD!** I'M A **SECRET OPERATIVE!**

IT WAS JUST A ROUTINE UNDERCOVER JOB-- WAIT FOR A PHONE CALL-- MAKE A CONTACT-- PASS ON SOME INFO--!

"THERE'S A BIG WAITRESS TURNOVER AT THE **SQUIRREL CAGE CAFE**, SO I HAD NO TROUBLE GETTIN' HIRED ON, ESTABLISHIN' MY **COVER.**

"MY THIRTEENTH DAY ON THE SWING SHIFT, I GOT THE **CALL.**

PASS IT ON AND COME HOME. YOU'RE **HOT!**

ROGER!

YOUR CONTACT IS MR. DUTCH... SHORT ...BLONDISH...SHOULD BE IN THE CAFE NOW...!

GOTCHA! MR. DUCK! SHORT GUY! NO SWEAT!

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME AS USUAL. OVER 'N' OUT!

NO, NO... MIZ! I SAID "DUTCH;" NOT--

CLIK

NOPE. NOT EVEN A BEAD-- OF SWEAT.

"I SPOTTED HIM RIGHT AWAY... AND HE WAS A DUCK, ALL RIGHT.

IT'S BEEN AN HOUR SINCE WE ORDERED, TOOTS. LET'S BLOW!

PARDON ME. YOUR CONTACT ACTUALLY WAS... A DUCK?

WHAT'RE YOU-- DEAF? YES, IT WAS A DUCK. BIG AS LIFE, VERY WELL-DRESSED.

I FIGURED MAYBE HE WORKED FOR JACK ANDERSON. ANYWAY...

"...I WAS HOT, REMEMBER, SO I DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME MAKE MY MOVE.

HEY! THAT'S MY STATION!

YOU MEAN IT WAS!

'SCUSE THE AGGRESSIVE-NESS, MR. DUCK, BUT... WE GOT THE EVIDENCE YOU WANTED.

YEAH...?!

AFFIRMATIVE! THE ARMY IS CONDUCTING SECRET EXPERIMENTS ON UNSUSPECTING CIVILIANS!

THAT'S WONDERFUL. WHERE'S OUR BEEF BOURGIGNON?

OBVIOUSLY, SHE DOESN'T HAVE THAT INFORMATION.

OH. WELL, THEN, HOW 'BOUT SOME CRACKERS?

Y'KNOW... LIKE THE ONES IN YOUR HEAD, LADY?

THERE SHE IS!!

YOU'RE A REAL PRO, MR. DUCK. WISH I COULD STICK AROUND AN' JAW.

BUT YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, NOW! TEN-FOUR!

GEE, SHE MUST BE ON THE LEVEL ABOUT SOMETHING!

NAH. THE ARMY ALWAYS USES THIS JOINT FOR WAR GAMES.

"THE ENTIRE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX WAS ON MY TAIL! MY CONTACT TRIED TO STALL 'EM FOR ME...

OUTTA MY WAY-- CIVILIAN!

"... BUT THEY BRUSHED HIM OFF LIKE A FLY.

"MR. DUCK HAD **MOXIE**, ALL RIGHT...

HOLD IT, YA BRASS-STUDDED CREEP! YOU REALLY **ARE** CHASIN' THAT OLD--

DON'T INTERFERE WITH **UNCLE SAM,** SHRIMP!

"...FOR ALL THE **GOOD** IT DID HIM.

THAT SWEET-LOOKIN' OLD BAG'S A **TRAINED AGENT** ABOUT TO SPILL **TOP-SECRET** INFO!

POW!

÷waaaugh=

"LIKE ALWAYS, IT FINALLY CAME DOWN TO **ME** AGAINST THEM SOLDIER BOYS!

HOLD IT RIGHT **THERE,** GRANNY!

COME AN' **GET** ME, DOG BREATH!

"I POLISHED 'EM OFF QUICK WITH MY **KUAI KWON KARATE** AN' SPLIT BACK TO **HEADQUARTERS!**"

KARATE... AND THIS WAS **FOLLOWING** YOUR VERBAL INTERACTION WITH... A **DUCK?**

ROGER! BUT WHEN I REPORTED BACK, MY PEOPLE SAID THE NAME WAS **"DUTCH"...!**

THEY THINK I'M **CRAZY--** THEY SENT ME TO SEE **YOU.**

SO WHAT'S YOUR **ANALYSIS,** DOC? **AM** I CRAZY?

I ONLY AGREED 'CAUSE IT'S COVERED ON THE GROUP **MEDICAL PLAN.**

OF COURSE NOT, MY DEAR.

MAD AS A HATTER... AND PROBABLY A MENACE.

DING

NO!! I'M A TRAINED AGENT!! THE DUCK **TALKED!!** **NOOOO**OOOOO=

Hmmm. PARANOID, TOO. THINKS THE **DUCK** BETRAYED HER. POOR OLD BIDDIE.

NEXT!

BLZZZ

I GUESS **I'M** NEXT. UH, RIGHT, DOC?

IF YOU **WANT** TO BE, YOUNG MAN. COME IN. INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

THE NAME'S DRIVER-- **SEYMOUR DRIVER**. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO **MEETING** YOU, DOC.

GEE, YOU HAVE THIN HANDS...!

ANYWAY, I, UH--**OOF!!**

OH, **DARN!**

KRAK

YOU'VE FOUND THE **COUCH**... SHALL WE **PROCEED?**

A CERTAIN... **PERCEPTUAL** DIFFICULTY, EH?

HUH? OH, NAW, I'M JUST A LITTLE **CLUMSY**. =heh= MY **PROBLEM'S** A WHOLE 'NOTHER THING.

=unngh= S-SURE... YOU BET... YOU SEE, I'VE GOT THIS **PROBLEM**...

PERHAPS YOU'D CARE TO **ELUCIDATE**, MR. DRIVER...?

WELL... I'M **WORRIED**, DOC. I THINK I'M **SEEING** THINGS.

AND IN MY BUSINESS, THAT'S **DANGER-OUS**. I'M A **BUS DRIVER**....!

"I WAS ON MY LAST TRIP OF THE DAY WHEN THIS **LITTLE GUY** HOPPED ON BOARD...!

TAKE ME TO THE NEAREST **ARMY BASE**, MAC-- AN' **STEP ON IT!**

STEP... ON AN ARMY BASE? THAT'S **SILLY!**

BESIDES, THIS IS A **BUS**, NOT A CAB! WHAT'RE YOU-- **BLIND?**

I HAVE A **ROUTE** TO FOLLOW, AND NEITHER RAIN, NOR SNOW, NOR DARK OF NIGHT--

JUST SKIP THE OATH AND **MOVE** THIS CRATE, WILLYA?

DON'T CALL **MY** BUS A CRATE! SHE'S A MULTIPLE-PASSENGER VEHICLE PRECISION-ENGINEERED TO TRAVERSE THE MULTI-FACETED SURFACE CONDITIONS OF CITY TRAFFIC--

;waaaugh;

--WHATEVER. ANYHOW, I AM THE **OPERATOR** OF THIS VEHICLE, AND IT DOESN'T STOP AT ANY **ARMY BASE!**

IN THAT CASE, BUSTER-- **THIS IS A HIJACKING!**

TRY NOT TO PANIC, FOLKS. I'M DOIN' THIS FOR **YOU.**

OKAY, PAL-- NO **TRICKS!** I'M HOLDIN' A NUMBER-TWO PENCIL TO YER HEAD!

ONE FALSE MOVE AND IT'S **GRAPH-ITE POISON-ING!**

=GULP= OKAY, OKAY... NON-RESISTANCE IS **COMPANY POLICY** IN THESE CASES.

THE ARMY BASE IT **IS!**

TAXI!!

THE HIJACKER-- WHAT DID HE **LOOK** LIKE?

WELL, HE WAS SORTA **BLONDISH--** AND VERY **SHORT--!**

A SHORT, BLONDISH **MAN.**

OH, NO-- HE WASN'T A **MAN.** ONE OF THE **PASSENGERS** SAID IT **BEST:**

Y-YOU'RE A-- **DUCK!!**

AN' YOU'RE A **STEREOTYPE.** SO WHAT? WE ALL GOT OUR **CROSSES** TO BEAR.

LOOK, HERE'S THE BUZZ: THE **ARMY'S** BEEN TESTIN' SOME KINDA **GAS** IN THE SEWER SYSTEMS--!

YOU'RE ALL THE **GUINEA PIGS**-- YOU, YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR NEIGHBORS--!

AND **ME!**

SOMEBODY'S GOTTA GET THE **GOODS** ON 'EM! DO YOU UNDER-STAND? DO YOU **CARE?**

I DUNNO. HOW 'BOUT YOU, EDDIE?

I'M A **VETERAN!** IF IT'S GOOD ENUFF FER THE **ARMY...!**

:sigh: IT'S ALL TOO MUCH FOR ME, ALL THIS **ECOLOGY** AND SO ON. :tsk:

UH...!

OKAY. SWELL. REMAIN **UNINVOLVED!** JUST STAY OUTTA MY--

"SUDDENLY, WE HAD REACHED THE NEAREST **ARMY BASE.**

CRASSH

"THE LITTLE GUY DIDN'T EVEN STAY ON BOARD LONG ENOUGH TO APOLOGIZE OR SAY GOOD-BYE OR **ANY-THING...!**"

A DUCK... HELD A PENCIL AT YOUR HEAD ...AND FORCED YOU TO CRASH THE GATE AT A MILITARY INSTALLATION...?

YEAH. AND WHEN THE MP'S QUESTIONED THE PASSENGERS, THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED...

...AND WHEN I TOLD MY SUPERIORS THE STORY, THEY THOUGHT I WAS FABRICATING...

...AND SENT ME HERE! DOC, WHAT'M I GONNA DO?

FOR NOW... JUST RELAX.

PING

RELIEF IS ON THE WAY.

RAUS!!

BERSERK AVENUE, NEXT STOP! WATCH YOUR STEP AS YOU EXIT!

I SHOULD GIVE UP THIS PRACTICE. IT'S BECOMING MORE **MUNDANE** BY THE MINUTE.

WHY DO I GET ALL THE **DULL** CASES? WHERE'S MY **"SYBIL"**-- MY **"ROSE GARDEN"**-- **MY GAWD!!**

NURSE COIL...?

YETH, DOCTOR... **MOLAR** TIME AGAIN?

ARE-- ARE THERE ANY MORE **PATIENTS?**

AH-FFIRMATIVE!! **GENERAL D. ZASTERMARCH** HERE! A-1 PATRIOT! RED-BLOODED NEPHEW OF MY UNCLE SAM!

KANG

ANY BUGS... ANY WIRES... ANY TAPS...?

NEGATIVE! CLEAN OF COMMIE CONTRIVANCES!

LET'S GET DOWN TO **BRASS TACKS!**

SHAKE!

NO **JOY-BUZZERS!** GOOD! I LIKE YOU, DOC! BUT CAN I **TRUST** YOU?

HAD TO COME TO A CIVILIAN! VERY HUSH-HUSH! YOU **READ** ME?

I ALWAYS RESPECT THE CONFIDENCE OF THE DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSH--

CHECK!

IT WAS A SUSPICIOUSLY **QUIET** DAY... AND THAT ALWAYS MEANS THE **REDS** ARE UP TO SOMETHING! **GOT** ME?

PLEASE CONTINUE.

"I WAS IN MY OFFICE -- RE-CREATING THE BOMBING OF **DRESDEN**, JUST TO CALM MY NERVES.

Wheeeeeeet

BOOOM!!

LUNCHEON IS SERVED, GENERAL.

HALT! WHAT'S THE **PASSWORD?**

Uhhhh...

THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH! YOU A **COMMIE?**

NO, **SIR!**

CHECK! I WAS JUST **TESTING** YOU!

WHAT'S FOR **CHOW?**

CHICKEN KIEV, GENERAL.

THAT'S NO CHICKEN, MISTER! THAT'S A DUCK!

GENERAL ZASTERMARCH! JUST THE JERK I'M LOOKIN' FOR!

THAT FOWL'S ALIVE, MISTER! AND IT TALKED! HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT?!

HE CAN'T, GENERAL! HE'S JUST ANOTHER INNOCENT DUPE! A MERE PAWN IN THIS STRANGE GAME!

ONLY A COMMIE TALKS LIKE THAT ABOUT A GOOD G.I.!!

YOU JUST SIGNED YOUR DEATH WARRANT, DUCK!!

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

WHAT AM I DOING HERE...?

DIE, MANDARIN DUCK!! YELLOW MENACE!! AH, THE RED ARMIES MARCHING, MARCHING...!

I'VE BEEN WAITING EVER VIGILANT...!

I'VE GOT YOU NOW! :hahaha:

KRACKOW

EASY, EASY!! LIGHTEN UP, WILLYA?! PINK IS IN THE EYE O' THE BEHOLDER, Y'KNOW?

"THEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT! BUT I DIDN'T LET UP! BLINDED THOUGH I WAS, I KEPT FIGHTIN' THE GOOD FIGHT--!

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

OH, DEAR...!

A DUCK? A DUCK?!?

A COMMIE DUCK! THAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE!

"THE WILY DEVIL CAUSED ME TO SHOOT MY **SAFE** OPEN! BLASTED BARNYARD **BOLSHEVIK!** IT WAS WHAT HE **WANTED** ALL ALONG:

=waaugh=

KA- CHINK

"A LOOK AT MY **TOP SECRET FILES!**

TOP SECRET

WELL, WELL--WHAT **HAVE** WE HERE?

AH-**HA!** THE EVIDENCE!

TOP SECRET

TOP-SECRET GOV'T FILE RE: TESTING SECRET GASES ON CIVILIANS WITHOUT THEM KNOWING WHAT WAS GOING ON!

"GREAT SCOTT!!"

I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE **SECRET FILE!!** YOU'RE A **COMMIE!!** YOU FIENDISHLY **PRIED** THE SECRET FROM ME!!

YOU **BRAINWASHED** ME--LULLED ME INTO A FALSE SENSE OF **NATIONAL SECURITY--!**

OF COURSE...!

I CAN **ALWAYS** TELL A COMMIE!

DING

THREE PEOPLE-- EACH WITH A STORY ABOUT A *TALKING DUCK!*--AN OUT-BREAK OF *MASS INSANITY?*

NO--NO-- IT'S SOME KIND OF PROFESSIONAL *CONSPIRACY* AGAINST *ME!*

YES! THAT'S IT! IT'S, UH... UH, DUCK...!

SO THE *FREE PRESS* IS GONNA PRINT THE STORY, HUH?

YEAH. THE ARMY WAS TESTIN' *LAUGHING GAS* IN THE SEWER SYSTEM.

IT WAS YOUR BASIC *PACIFY-THE-POPULACE* SCAM.

IN CASE THE *NEUTRON BOMB* WENT THROUGH, THEY FIGURED THEY COULD RE-LEASE THE GAS, AN' EVERYBODY'D DIE *HAPPY*--

--KNOWING THEIR *PROPERTY* WAS SAFE FROM--

DUCKS--!!

DUCKS!! WE'RE BEING *INVADED* BY DUCKS!!

QUACK! QUACK! QUACK!

IT'S A *SHAME* WHEN SHRINKS GO NUTS, DUCKY. WHAT *HOPE* IS THERE FOR THE REST OF US?

NOT MUCH, KIDDO... NOT *MUCH!*

NEXT *HELP STAMP OUT DUCKS!*

STILL ONLY 35¢

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29 JAN | CC 02415

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

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TM

DUCK-ITIS POSTER CHILD 1978

Colan austin

HELP STAMP OUT DUCKS

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!

HELP STAMP OUT DUCKS!

WELL--I DECIDED TO STAY IN *CLEVELAND* TO NURSE SOME OLD *MEMORIES*--

--AN' DISCOVERED THE PATIENT HAD *DIED!*

MEMO

100 PAK VITAMINT 99¢

ONE WAY

I AM

H

ITATION

EVERYTHING'S JUST LIKE I REMEMBERED-- *REPULSIVE!*

MARK EVANIER PLOT | STEVE GERBER WRITER / EDITOR | WILL MEUGNIOT ARTIST | R.VILLAMONTE INKER | JOE ROSEN, LETTERER | MICHELE W., COLORIST

I SUPPOSE I *HOPED* THIS BURG WOULD EVOKE A LITTLE *NOSTALGIA*-- FOR THE GOOD OL' DAYS WITH *BEV* LOOMIN' OVER ME.

NO DICE! COMIN' *HOME* ONLY REMINDS ME HOW MUCH I WANTED TA *LEAVE!*

FLY RIO

SO IT'S *GOODBYE,* MANNY-- ADIEU! SAYONARA! DOSVEDANYA! HASTA LA VISTA! AS AN *AGENT,* YOU MAKE A GREAT *BARCALOUNGER!*

I'M *JOEY GONIFF,* MANNY-- I WAS *MR. LAS VEGAS* 'TIL SHECKY GREENE CAME ALONG-- AN' I'M GONNA BE BIG *AGAIN!*

VARIETY

Y-YOU *ARE* BIG, JOEY-- IT'S THE *AUDIENCES* THAT GOT SMALL!

YEAH, WELL THAT'S ALL GONNA *CHANGE!* NO MORE PLAYIN' THE *STICKS,* MANNY!

NO MORE TWO-BIT OHIO *SALOON* GIGS! I NEED *EXPOSURE!*

AN' I'M GONNA *GET* IT-- 36 CONTINUOUS HOURS, NATIONWIDE-- A *TELETHON,* MANNY! PICTURE IT! JOEY GONIFF-- *SURROUNDED* BY SUFFERING CHILDREN--

--PLEADING WITH AMERICA TO OPEN ITS HEART AND ITS CHECK-BOOKS TO HALT THIS *PLAGUE*-- BEFORE IT *RAVAGES* SOMEONE YOU LOVE!

NOW I JUST GOTTA FIND A DISEASE *HORRIBLE* ENOUGH-- A DISEASE I CAN CALL MY *OWN!*

TRY JADED *VENTRICLES!*

PAX

YEP, YOU'RE LOOKIN' *GOOD,* JOEY, AND SOON--

AWWWP

PAX

WAAAUGH

IT'S LUCKY YOUR *GUT'S* AS SPONGY AS YOUR *HEAD!* I COULD'A BEEN *CRUSHED!*

GOOD *LORD*, BUT YOU'RE GROTESQUE!

HAH--?

LOOK, PAL, I'M NOT FOOL ENOUGH TO EXPECT AN *APOLOGY*, BUT--

YOUR FACE -- HIDEOUSLY DISFIGURED! YOUR BODY-- TWISTED, *DEFORMED!*

AND THOSE SPINDLY *LEGS!* THOSE *FEET!*

MY GOD-- YOU LOOK LIKE -- A *DUCK!!*

THERE'S AN ORIGINAL OBSER-VATION.

H-HOW DOES IT *FEEL*? ARE YOU IN *PAIN*? CONSTANT, *EXCRUCIATING*, UNENDURABLE PAIN?

ONLY SINCE WE *MET.*

WOULD *CASH* ALLEVIATE YOUR SUFFERING, MY BOY? *MOUNTAINS* OF CASH?

IT COULDN'T *HURT--!*

THEN STICK WITH *ME*, KID!

SHORTLY, AT THE CLEVELAND OFFICE OF AMALGAMATED CHARITIES--!

IT'S CALLED *POULTRITIS AMPELOPSIS*, DR. KNUDSEN-- AND IT'S A *KILLER!*

IT TURNS HEALTHY KIDS INTO-- *DUCKS!*

MR. GONIFF, WE GET *DOZENS* OF REQUESTS EACH YEAR FROM DOWN-AND-OUT COMICS LIKE YOURSELF--

SURELY YOU'RE NOT IMPUGNING MY *MOTIVES!*

NAH-- I JUST FIGURE YOU'RE A DAMN *LIAR!*

BUT THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT! *GET NAKED,* DUCKO!

=WAAAUGH=

HOLD IT, PRUNE-FACE! I'M *PARTICULAR* ABOUT WHO TOUCHES *WHAT* ON ME!

THIS'S THE ONLY BODY I *GOT!*

THAT'S *YOUR* PROBLEM! I CANNOT VERIFY THE EXISTENCE OF A DISEASE WITHOUT A *THOROUGH* PHYSICAL EXAMINATION!

C'MON, HOWIE-- BE *REASONABLE!* SHE'S A *DOCTOR--!*

THAT'S WHAT IT *SAYS* ON THE *DOOR--*

--BUT NOT IN HER *EYES!*

OKAY, OKAY--!

HMMM... DAGGER-TIPPED TONGUE, NO TONSILS, DISTENDED UPPER PALATE...!

=NNGH= WE CALL IT A *BILL* IN THE TRADE.

IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT...!

C-COLD *STETHOSCOPE,* STUPID...!

THE EVIDENCE IS *MOUNTING,* HOWEVER...!

OH, NO!! SORRY! THE *RUBBER GLOVE* IS WHERE I DRAW THE *LINE!!*

SHE CAN *EXAMINE--* BUT NOT *EXPLORE!*

DOWN THE HALLWAY...

SORRY TO BURST IN THIS WAY, MA'AM--!

OH. EEK. GASP. A FEATHERED RABBIT.

H.P. Bartrie's 1 BON-BONS 8

DOCTOR. OH, DOCTOR.

WHY HAVE YOU COME TO VISIT UPON ME, LI'L CREATURE PERSON?

SKIP IT, SWEETS. YOU'D NEVER UNDER-STAND.

BONBONS

I FEAR YOU ARE CORRECT-- AMONG OTHER THINGS.

OH, DOCTOR. THANK HEAVENS, YOU CAME. SO DID THE FEATHERED RABBIT.

I THINK I AM GETTING WELL.

SIGH

WHILE, BACK IN KNUDSEN'S OFFICE...

I'M SATISFIED, MR. GONIFF. WE'LL ARRANGE FOR THE *TELETHON* AT ONCE.

THANKS, DOC! I KNEW YOU WERE A GOOD EGG!

LIKE THEY SAY-- CHARITY BEGINS AT *AMALGAMATED!*

PAT

IN AN ALLEYWAY NEARBY...

IT'S OKAY, HOWIE. THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS TOOK THE *BAIT.*

CONDEMNE

SHE *WOULD'A* TOOK A WHOLE LOT *MORE* IF I'D *ALLOWED* IT.

ANYHOW, THE SHOW'S GOT THE *GREEN LIGHT!* MY CAREER'S *SAVED*-- AN' YOU'RE GONNA BE *RICH!*

SO IT'S TIME YOU START *ACTIN'* THE PART! FIRST, SOME CLASSY NEW *DUDS*--

"--AN' THEN THE *PRESIDENTIAL SUITE* AT THE POSHEST HOTEL IN TOWN!"

7777

ROOM SERVICE!

SO YOU'RE THE *TERMINAL CASE,* HUH? MR. GONIFF ORDERED YOU THE *SPECIALTY OF THE HOUSE.*

WHICH OBVIOUSLY ISN'T *TACT.*

NAW, IT'S *FOOD.*

AND JUST IN *TIME.*

TEN MINUTES OF "STARSKY AND HUTCH" AND I'M *CRAVING* ANYTHING WITH SOME --

--SUBSTANCE.

OH, LORD ... ROAST *ANCESTOR* AGAIN...!

I REALLY *AM* GONNA BE SICK...!

RRRING

WHASSAMATTA, HOWIE? EATS TOO *RICH?*

HANG IN THERE A SEC! *PHONE!*

THAT'S RIGHT, MR. GONIFF-- *LIVE* FROM THE *HIGH ROLLER ROOM* OF THE FABULOUS *RANCHO ZIRCON* IN *LAS VEGAS*-- NEXT SATURDAY!

MR. GONIFF-- ARE YOU THERE--?

TH-THE ZIRCON, HUH-- IN *VEGAS*, HUH-- THAT'S ⁝ULP⁝ SWELL--!

A DELUGE OF *MEMORIES* FLOODS GONIFF'S PURPORTED MIND: THE *BACCARAT* TABLES--!

AN UNCOLLECTED $54,000 *MARKER*--!

A HASTY *EXIT*--!

B-BUT VEGAS IS SO-- *CORNY!*

C-COULDN'T WE ORIGINATE FROM-- LIKE, OH-- *PORTLAND?*

HELP STAMP OUT DUCKS

ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN *FINALIZED*, MR. GONIFF.

SEE YOU UNDER THE *STARS*.

⁝AHEM⁝ WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A *TELETHON*, GONIFF? I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE WERE JUST GONNA RIP A FEW BUCKS OFF A *CROOKED CHARITY OPERATION!*

I DON'T CHEAT THE *PUBLIC*, JOEY.

IT'S OKAY, HOWIE-- *TRUST* ME!

"THE PUBLIC CHEATS *ITSELF*," *JOEY MUMBLES*, "YOU'LL SEE."

CHARO ZIRCON

JOEY GONIFF'S HEEBIES TE

"ANYWAY, IT'S NOT *REALLY* A SCAM! IF WE MAKE ANY BIG *DOUGH*, WE'LL HAND IT OVER TO A *LEGIT* DISEASE, SEE?

"MEANTIME, *YOU* GET TREATED LIKE A *PRINCE*--

"--AN' MY *CAREER* GETS A SHOT IN THE ARM! NO HARM DONE, ALL IN *FUN*!".

AHEM!

JOEY.

IT'S BEEN A LOTTA YEARS.

LOTTA YEARS, JOEY. MAYBE YOU *FORGOT* US.

DID YOU, JOEY? DID *BIG ARTHUR* AN' THE $54,000 SLIP YER *MIND*, JOEY?

'CAUSE IF THEY *DID*, JOEY-- YER *KNEES* IS GONNA SLIP THEIR *CAPS*-- GET IT?

'NUFF SAID.

THE 115-DEGREE DAYS **DRAG** ON.

JOEY SWEATS THEM OUT IN HIS AIR-CONDITIONED **SUITE**...

...WHILE THE NATION'S MOST HEART-WRENCHING **POSTER CHILD** SOAKS UP THE DESERT **SUN**...AND VEGAS' OTHER DUBIOUS DELIGHTS.

AW-W-W, YOU POOR MALFORMED LITTLE THINGY! SO TINY, YET SO BRAVE!

LET MICHELLE HOLD YOUR HAND!

=SNIF= ARE YOU THIS VAPID WITH ALL YOUR MEN-FRIENDS, TOOTS--OR JUST THE AFFLICTED?

=SOB= OH, YES-- YES! I SWEAR I AM!

I DON'T PITY YOU-- I ADMIRE YOUR COURAGE!

AND I-- NAH, SKIP IT.

AND SO IT GOES, UNTIL EIGHT P.M. SATURDAY-- AND THE ADVENT OF THE FIRST ANNUAL LICK POULTRITIS TV EXTRAVAGANZA--

--LIVE FROM AMERICA'S PLAYGROUND, LAS VEGAS! I'M YOUR HOST, JOEY GONIFF!

AND FOR THE NEXT 36 HOURS, WE'LL BE ENTREATING YOU TO GIVE, GIVE, GIVE--

--TO HELP STAMP OUT DUCKS!!

A *MENACE* IS STALKING OUR CHILDREN, AMERICA-- A *PLAGUE* THAT COULD ROB YOUR SON OR YOUR DAUGHTER OF A NORMAL, PRODUCTIVE LIFE --

--JUST AS IT DID OUR 1978 POSTER CHILD, LITTLE *HOWARD!*

TELL THE FOLKS AT HOME, HOWIE-- HOW DOES IT *FEEL* TO BE A VICTIM OF *POULTRITIS*?

=WAAAUGH=

=SOB= IT BREAKS MY *HEART*, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! HIS LITTLE BODY HAS BEEN *DIS-TORTED* BEYOND RECOGNITION--

--AND YET HIS INDOMITABLE *WILL* HAS NOT QUACKED! PLEASE! PHONE IN YOUR *PLEDGES!* DO IT *NOW!*

TEN DOLLARS!

TWENTY DOLLARS!

EIFTY DOLLARS!

THE DIGIT-COUNTERS **TURN**... AS DOES THE FOWL'S **STOMACH.**

DURING A **STATION BREAK,** HE FLEES THE HIGH ROLLER ROOM TO EXPLORE THE RANCHO ZIRCON **CASINO.**

YOUR BETS, LADIES AND-- URRK?
I WANNA PUT A NICKEL ON 17.
I'M, EH, AFRAID THERE'S A $10 MINIMUM--!
LOU-- IT'S OKAY. HE'S THE CRIPPLED KID WITH THE TELETHON.
LET 'IM BET-- IN FUN. I'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.
IF YOU SAY SO, BOSS.
ALL CLEAR? FIVE CENTS ON 17 AT 36 TO ONE! LET 'ER RIP!
C'MON, LITTLE BALL-- MAKE ME A BIG BUCK-EIGHTY WINNER!
THE SILVER BALL OBLIGES.
OKAY-- LET THE WHOLE $1.80 RIDE ON 17.
FIVE SPINS LATER...!
AHEM SIR, YOU HAVE WON IN EXCESS OF ULP THREE MILLION DOLLARS.
CAN I HELP IT IF SEVENTEEN'S MY LUCKY NUMBER?
'COURSE, I'M A FAIR-MINDED FOWL. I FIGURE YOU DESERVE A CHANCE TO WIN BACK A COUPL'A BUCKS.
LET IT RIDE!!
A HUSH FALLS OVER THE STUNNED CROWD AS THE ROULETTE WHEEL SPINS AGAIN...

...BRINGING AN END TO THE DUCK'S LUCKY STREAK.

OOPS.

-SIGH- AH, WELL... YOU WIN SOME, YOU LOSE SOME... YOU BREAK YOUR HEART, YOU SPILL YOUR ENTRAILS...!

YOU OKAY, KID? YOU LOOK UPSET.

OF COURSE, I'M UPSET, DUMMY! I JUST LOST MY LUCKY NICKEL!

THE HOURS DRAG ON... PAST DAWN... PAST NOON, UNTIL...

WE'VE DONE IT, AMERICA--YOU AND ME, JOEY GONIFF, YOUR HOST!

$50000

WE'VE REACHED OUR GOAL OF $250,000!!

GOD LOVE YA!!!

$50000

AND NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, FOLKS, I WANT TO PRESENT THE CASH PORTION OF OUR DONATIONS PERSONALLY TO OUR DEDICATED RESEARCHERS--!

CAREFUL, MR. GONIFF! THAT'S $54,000 YOU'RE CARRYIN'!

DON'T I KNOW IT! AND WON'T DR. BIG ARTHUR BE OVERJOYED!

WHOA, FUNNY-MAN! WHAT GOES ON HERE?

WE DECIDED ON THE *PLANE*, REMEMBER-- *YOU* GET YOUR *TV* EXPOSURE-- *I* GET MY EXPENSES-- AND THE *REST* GOES TO A REAL CHARITY?

YOU'RE NOT *RENEGING* ON OUR *AGREEMENT*, ARE YOU?

NEVER!! JOEY GONIFF IS AS GOOD AS HIS *WORD!!*

BUT-- UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES-- YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO *TIE MY HANDS*--

UNLESS YA WANT THE *TRUTH* ABOUT THIS SCAM ALL OVER THE *FRONT PAGE*-- YEAH, I CAN.

Y-YOU WOULDN'T--?

OH, GOD-- YOU *WOULD!!* MY CAREER WOULD BE A *SHAMBLES!!*

YOU'D *RUIN* ME-- JUST LIKE THAT-- AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU!!

TO ME, MOSTLY, PAL.

I'LL HANDLE THE CASH FROM HERE ON.

APPROPRIATING A DISGUISE FROM THE SHOWROOM'S COSTUME DEPARTMENT...

...THE DUCK TAKES TO THE STREETS.

UH-OH. I'M GETTIN' THE *UN-COMFORTABLE* FEELING...

...I'M BEIN' TAILED!

AND SURE ENOUGH...

IT *IS* YOU! YOU'RE THE WEIRD BIRD FROM THE *TELETHON!*

I *GOT* SOMETHIN' FOR *YOU*, LI'L DUCK!!

=AAAGH=

SEE, I WORK THE *GRAVEYARD* SHIFT--

--AN' I COULDN'T PHONE IN MY *PLEDGE* IN TIME, SO--

HEY! DON'T RUN OFF! AW, GEE--!!

THE DUCK DUCKS INTO A NEARBY *ALLEY...!*

MY PARANOIA'S GETTIN' THE *BETTER* OF ME.

CLICK CLACK CLICK

I'M TOO *VISIBLE* IN THIS TOWN!

MAYBE I OUGHTTA *LAY LOW* 'TIL THEY DISCOVER ANOTHER *HUGHES WILL* OR SOMETHING...

...*ANYTHING* TO DISTRACT 'EM FROM...

FOOTSTEPS!! THEY'RE STILL *AFTER* ME-- WHOEVER *THEY* ARE!!

CLICK CLACK CLICK CLACK

THE MOB-- THE COPS-- A WAITRESS I DIDN'T *TIP*--!!

IT DOESN'T MATTER! ONE'S AS *VICIOUS* AS THE *NEXT!*

THIS TOWN IS *FUELED* ON FILTHY *LUCRE--*

AWWWP!

OKAY...THAT'S THE BALL GAME! I TRIPPED *UP!* YOU *FOUND* ME!

JUST MAKE IT AS *PAINLESS* AS *POSSIBLE--?*

OH, DEAR-- DID I *FRIGHTEN* YOU?

OR DOES YOUR DISEASE ALSO CAUSE *MENTAL* PROBLEMS?

UH... NAH... THAT'S THE DISEASE CALLED *"LIFE."*

WHAT CAN I *DO* FOR YA?

VERY LITTLE, ACTUALLY! I'M HEALTHY, HAPPY. I HAVE A GOOD HOME, LOVING PARENTS, A PET *GILA MONSTER---!*

IT'S WHAT *I* CAN DO FOR *YOU!*

HERE-- *TAKE* IT.

I WENT DOOR-TO-DOOR IN MY *NEIGHBORHOOD* -- AND COLLECTED MORE THAN *TWENTY-TWO DOLLARS--!*

I GUESS I'VE GOT THE KIND OF FACE PEOPLE CAN'T *RESIST,* Y'KNOW?

THE STOMACH... IT'S GOIN' AGAIN...!

LAST YEAR, I COLLECTED *FIFTY CLAMS* FOR *UNICEF*-- BUT THE BRAND-NAMES ALWAYS DO BETTER.

NEXT YEAR, I BET *POULTRITIS* WILL--

PLEASE-- STOP-- I CAN'T *STAND* IT.

SOMEBODY OUGHTTA BOB JOEY GONIFF'S *NOSE.*

I DON'T GET IT--!

SKIP IT, SWEETS. JUST TAKE THIS ATTACHÉ TO *YOUR* FAVORITE CHARITY.

I CAN *TRUST* YOU, CAN'T I?

SURE... BUT WHAT ABOUT *YOU?*

HOW WILL YOU EVER GET *WELL?!*

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE-- I DUNNO-- I'LL MAKE OUT! BYE, KID--!

*MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE **RANCHO ZIRCON**...!*

YEAH? DIDJA SEE IT, MANNY? WAS IT EVERYTHING I *PROMISED?*

ARE THE OFFERS ROLLIN' *IN,* HUH? DID I *TELL* YOU?

HANG UP, GONIFF!

HUH...?

THE *MARKER,* JOEY-- BIG ARTHUR'S GETTIN' *ANXIOUS*-- HE DON'T WANNA *WAIT* NO MORE--!

AW, C'MON, BEEFY-- GIMME A BREAK! I GOT OFFERS NOW FROM *CARSON*-- FROM *MERV*-- I'M GONNA BE *BIG*-- I'M GOOD FOR THE DOUGH--!

GIMME A *BREAK!*

POW

"YEAH," BEEFY GRUMBLES. "THAT'S WHAT I HAD IN MIND."

CLEVELAND-- ONE-WAY-- NO FRILLS!

OH, POOH! SEE THAT HE GETS *ONE FRILL*-- IT'S ON ME!

I WON *THREE DOLLARS* AT THE SLOTS TODAY-- BEFORE BREAKFAST!

LADY, HONEST-- I WOULDN'T KNOW WHICH FRILL TO *PICK*-- FORGET IT--!

I SHOULD SAY *NOT!* SHARE THE WEALTH! THAT'S *MY* MOTTO.

WHAT'S *YOUR* MOTTO?

"SHUT UP AN' LEMME ALONE."

OH, I GROK! YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE NEW, *SELF-ORIENTATED* TYPES!

WELL... SECRETLY, SO AM *I*.

I'M MY *OWN* LITTLE OLD LADY! I *GO* WHERE I WANT, *DO* WHAT I WANT, *SAY* WHAT I WANT...!

OF COURSE, NOBODY CARES. ALL MY RELATIVES ARE *DEAD*...

Lido

16 DOUBLE
14 SINGLE

WAAAUGH

NEXT ISSUE BACK TO OUR REGULAR STORYLINE AND *THE* RETURN OF DOCTOR BONG!

STILL ONLY 35¢

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK®

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FORGED IN THE FLAMES OF FRENZY--
THE MOST UNWILLING WARRIOR OF ALL :

IRON DUCK

WAUGH!

TO BATTLE DOCTOR BONG

COLAN
MILGROM

Stan Lee presents: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

SKUDGE HOSPITAL, INSCENIC SKUDGE, PA.--

--WHERE, BEHIND DRAWN SHADES, OUR REGULARLY-SCHEDULED STORYLINE RESUMES...

...AS MODERN MEDICINE STRAINS TO THE LIMITS OF IRIS RARITAN'S INSURANCE COVERAGE TO SAVE THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF PAUL SAME AND WINDA WESTER--*

--TWO OF THE VERY FEW FRIENDS CLAIMED BY ONE HOWARD THE DUCK!

TAKE IT EASY, HOW! WINDA'S COME OUT OF HER TRAUMA--

--AN' PAUL'S CONDITION'S STABILIZED, THE DOCS SAY!

THAT AIN'T WHAT'S EATIN' ME, LEE!

I JUST SUDDENLY GOT A CHILL UP MY PIN-FEATHERS AN' A PREMONITION OF...

LG250

*BOTH PLACED IN JEOPARDY BY THE THOUGHTLESSNESS OF IRIS RARITAN AND THE INSIDIOUSNESS OF THE RING-MASTER, AS SEEN IN HTD #'S 25-27.--JIM.

CONTINUING THE LEGEND...

BILL MANTLO / WRITER | GENE COLAN / ARTIST | ALLEN MILGROM / EMBELLISHER

MARK GRUENWALD / ASSISTANT EDITOR • JIM SHOOTER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF • ELAINE H. / LETTERER • MICHELE W. / COLORIST

BOONING

...DISASTER! WAAUGH! IT'S HIM-- HE FOUND ME!

DOCTOR BONG!

GREETINGS, HOWARD! LONG TIME, NO SEE!

SUDDENLY, HOWARD AND LEE SWITZLER FIND THEMSELVES RE-VERBRATORILY ROOTED TO THE SPOT, ABLE TO DO NAUGHT BUT WONDER...

IF THIS BE BONGSDAY!

O-OH, M-MY S-STARS! S-STOP THIS N-NOISE AT ONCE! T-THIS IS A H-HOSPITAL--

--N-NOT A BELFRY!

GOWWY! IT'S THE MADMAN WHO CAUSED ALL OUR TWOUBLES!

OH, I FEEL FAINT...!

LEGGO OF ME, LEE--PLEASE!

DUCKO, WHO IS THIS GUY?

ANGERED BY THE SUDDEN CHAOS ENGENDERED BY HIS UNANNOUNCED ARRIVAL--

BOONNG

AND...

SILENCE, ALL!

--THE ENTITY KNOWN AS DR. BONG CLAPS HIS GHASTLY PROSTHESIS TO HIS HORRIFYING HELMET!

IT BORES ME, FOWL, TO HAVE TO CONTINUOUSLY DEMONSTRATE MY PARALYZING POWERS!

I'D HOPED YOU WOULD HAVE LEARNED SINCE OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER*, THAT FLIGHT IS FUTILE!

*SEE HTD #15.--J.S.

YET I AM HERE NOT TO PASS JUDGMENT ON YOUR ASTUTENESS. MARK ME--YOU HAVE COME BETWEEN ME AND THE UNDIVIDED AFFECTIONS OF MY WIFE!

SHE STILL CARES FOR YOU HOWARD-- I'VE SEEN IT IN HER EYES! SHE'LL NEVER BE WHOLLY MINE--

--UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!

BUT TORPID HOWARD IS LESS CONCERNED WITH BONG'S THREAT THAN WITH THE REVELATION THAT...

BEV CARES -- SHE STILL CARES!

SHE MUST'VE MARRIED BONG TO SAVE ME--*

*SEE HTD #18.-- JIM.

--AN' SHE'S ONLY STAYIN' MARRIED TO KEEP HIM FROM COMIN' AFTER ME AGAIN!

NOT THAT THERE MIGHTN'T 'A BEEN A FEW GOOD TIMES WITH BONG ALONG THE WAY--

--BUT WHY DWELL ON THE DISGUSTING? BONG'S JUST MADE ME HAPPIER THAN I'VE BEEN IN MONTHS!

THERE ARE ONLY TWO THINGS I WISH FROM LIFE, HOWARD! WORLD CONQUEST--

--AND THE DEVOTION OF MY SPOUSE! YOU STAND IN THE WAY OF MY ATTAINING BOTH DESIRES!

I COULD SLAY YOU WHERE YOU STAND, DUCK--BUT IMAGE IS ALL! YOU MUST BE RENDERED LIFELESS BEFORE THE AWESTRUCK EYES OF ASSEMBLED HUMANITY...

--AND BEFORE MY BELOVED-- BEVERLY!

UH-OH! I WAS HOPIN' HE WOULDN'T SAY BEVIS NAME 'TIL I COULD BREAK IT TO LEE THAT...

...THIS IS THE CREEP MY NIECE GOT HERSELF HITCHED TO??!

WHY DIDN'T HOWIE TELL ME? I COULDA DONE SOMETHING!

JUST WHAT THE PARALYZED LEE MIGHT HAVE DONE, GOES UNVOICED--

--WHILE DR. BONG UNFURLS THE KEYNOTE OF HIS SINISTER SCHEME!

FINAL EDITION ★★★★

★★★★ SEPT. 26

FOWL ABANDONS FRIENDS

HOSPITAL DESTROYED

DO YOU SEE THIS FACSIMILE HEADLINE I'VE HAD PRINTED FOR TOMORROW'S SKUDGE TIMES, HOWARD?

≠U-ULP!≠

FAIL TO MEET ME IN MORTAL COMBAT IN 24 HOURS AND I WILL REDUCE THIS HOSPITAL--AND YOUR FRIENDS -- TO RUBBLE!

YOU WILL BE BRANDED FOREVER IN BEVERLY'S EYES AS... HOWARD THE COWARD!

'TIL THEN, FRIEND DRAKE--

DUNNG

THUNK

A PARTING SHOT--

NYAH-NYAH!

--AND BONG IS GONE!

DUCKO--WE CAN MOVE AGAIN!

GOOD! JUST DON'T LEAVE A FORWARDING ADDRESS!

IF YOU GENTLE-MEN ARE GOING TO SCREAM, I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE! MR. SAME'S PULSE IS GROWING WEAKER--

--AND THE SHOCK OF WHAT SHE'S SEEN HAS FURTHER TRAUMATIZED MS. WEBSTER!

AN' THAT'S WHAT JUST A LITTLE BONG CAN DO T'YA!

LISTEN SISTER--KEEP YER LIP ZIPPED AN' YOU'LL SEE A CASE IN 24 HOURS THAT WILL MAKE MEDICAL HISTORY!

TERMINAL FOWL!

HOW, THIS IS NO TIME FOR WITTY REPARTEE! THAT BELL-HEADED BOZO'S GOT MY BROTHER'S LITTLE GIRL--

'AN HE MEANS TA KEEP HER!!

A-AND I DON'T FEEL TOO GOOD MYSELF!

C'MON, LEE!

OUTSIDE, IN THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR...

HOLD UP, DUCKO--YOU AIN'T BEEN LEVELING WITH ME!

ABOUT BEV? YEH --I GUESS I FIGURED IT'D BE TOO HARD ON ANYBODY'S REALITY RESERVES BUT MINE!

IT'S A LONG STORY, PAL--

--STARTING WITH OUR VOYAGE HOME FROM BAGMOM ABOARD THE S.S. DAMNED!*

"WE GOT CAUGHT IN A DOWNPOUR --THE GRANITE VARIETY...

*HTD #15:--JIM.

"...AN' WHEN THOSE SILVER DOLLARS FROM HEAVEN STOPPED SHOWERING THE DECK--

"--ONE OF 'EM HATCHED INTO A CONCRETE SWAN!

BEV!! LEGGO!!

WAAAGH

BEV--WHY DIDN'T YA LET GO?

I--I'M SORRY, DUCKY--I COULDN'T!

IT HAPPENED TOO QUICKLY-- MY GRIP FROZE--!

BOYG

BONG

BONG

"YEH--AN' WE WERE BORNE AWAY TOWARDS A MYSTERIOUS BELL-SHAPED ATOLL THAT WASN'T EVEN ON THE MAP... THE ISLAND OF DR. BONG!

"TURNS OUT BONG WAS LESTER VERDE, A JOURNALISM STUDENT THAT HAD THE HOTS FOR BEV IN COLLEGE! HE WANTED BEV'S HAND IN UNHOLY MATRIMONY--

"--AN' HE WANTED T'GIVE ME ...NEEZ!

"HARD T'EXPLAIN WHAT THAT IS, BUT IF HE'D SUCCEEDED --WELL--YA WOULDN'T A'RECOGNIZED ME!

"BEV SAVED ME FROM NEEZ, FIDDLIN' WITH THE DIALS OF BONG'S EVOLVO-CHAMBER--

"--SO THAT I WAS GENETICALLY RECONSTRUCTED AS A >GAG< HAIRLESS APE!

"THEN BONG FORCED BEV TO MARRY HIM...I ESCAPED WITH HIS FRENCH MAID IN A FLYIN' BONGER--

"--WHICH CRASH-LANDED IN CENTRAL PARK...

BONNGGG

"BONG TRACKED ME DOWN JUST AS I REVERTED TO MY PRESENT HANDSOME SELF!

"HE'D TAKEN BEV--MESSED WITH MY GENES--AN' FIFI, THE MAID, HAD DIED HELPING ME ESCAPE HIM! I'D HAD IT, AN' I LET HIM HAVE IT! HE... BLINKED OUT--

--AN THAT WAS THE LAST I SAW OF HIM 'TIL FIVE MINUTES AGO

I GUESS I THOUGHT BEV WOULDN'T'VE STAYED WITH HIM UNLESS SHE WANTED TO!

OR MAYBE I JUST AIN'T A FIGHTER--I LET BONG WIN HER.

BUT NOW I GOT NO CHOICE! I EITHER LET BONG KILL ME--OR PAUL, WINDA AN' SKUDGE HOSPITAL TAKE THE RAP!

MAYBE NOT, PUCKO! IF YER WILLIN' TO STAND UP TO BONG NOW--I MIGHT KNOW OF A WAY YOU CAN DO IT...AN' LIVE!

IT'S A LONG-SHOT --BUT SO'S SUICIDE! LEND ME YOUR EARS, DUCKO...!

DUBIOUSLY, HOWARD LISTENS...

WHILE, HALF A WORLD AWAY, HIGH ATOP THE WILD AND WOOLLY HIMALAYAS--

--THE RELOCATED CASTLE OF DOCTOR BONG FROWNS OMINOUSLY OVER THE FROZEN LANDSCAPE, AWAITING ITS MASTER'S RETURN!!

BUT THE GOOD DOCTOR HAS NOT YET ARRIVED, AND THE CASTLE'S LABYRINTHINE CORRIDORS ARE SILENT--VACANT--

--SAVE FOR ONE WING--BLASTED INTO DISUSE BY AN ABORTIVE EXPERIMENT, LO, THESE MANY MONTHS PAST!

THIS IS THE FEARSOME EVOLVO-CHAMBER OF DR. BONG!

NEEZ?

NEEZ!

NEEZ!

AND IT IS TO HERE THAT THE LOVELY LADY OF THE HOUSE--BEVERLY VERDE, NEÉ, SWITZLER --HAS REPAIRED WITH HER FAITHFUL RETINUE OF NEEZERS--

--TO BETRAY HER HUSBAND!

OKAY, KIDS--WE'VE ESTABLISHED A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP THESE PAST FEW WEEKS!

I'VE THROWN YOU DOUBLE PORTIONS BEHIND LESTER'S BACK--FORCED HIM TO EASE UP ON YOUR SPEECH THERAPY--AND NOW'S THE PAYOFF!

I WANT WHATEVER ACTIVATES THE DOC'S EVOLVO-CHAMBER!

NEEZ!

GOOD GIRL, GRETA --AN EXTRA HELPING OF LIVA SNAPS FOR YOU TO-NIGHT!

SIGH

WITH TREMBLING HANDS, BEV INSERTS THE KEY--

KRRIC KLAC

--TURNS IT TO THE LEFT...

AND...

HOT DOG! EVERY-THING STILL WORKS!

NEEZ!

NEEZ?

ZSNAP ZSCRACKLE ZSPOP

WELL, THAT'S *PHASE ONE!* BY NOW LESTER'S DELIVERED HIS ULTIMATUM TO *HOWARD!* NOT MUCH *TIME* LEFT!

BUT IF I CAN REACH LESTER'S *INNER-SANCTUM...* HIS *ULTIMATE WEAPON...* I MAY STILL BE ABLE TO *STOP HIM!*

GREETINGS, BELOVED BEVERLY!

OH, *GEEZ--* *LESTER!!* H-HOME *EARLY,* HUH?

NEEZ!

NEEZ?

NEEZ!

RAVE ON, BELL-BRAIN! THE *BROTH* IS COOKING IN THE *EVOLVO-CHAMBER*--AND MY PLAN TO SAVE MY *DUCKY* IS GOING *FULL SPEED AHEAD!*

WITH *GLAD TIDINGS!* WITHIN 24 HOURS I WILL HAVE RIGHTFULLY *WON* YOUR AFFECTION!

HOWARD THE DUCK WILL BE *DEAD!*

BUT YET ANOTHER BEVERLY SWITZLER IS HATCHING *SCHEMES* AS WELL...

...*LOOK,* DUCKO--SINCE YA FIGURE BONG'S GONNA *WASTE* YA ANYWAY, WHY NOT GIVE HIM A *FIGHT* FOR HIS MONEY??

CLEVELAND 10MI.

AN', IF YOU'RE GONNA FIGHT--WHY NOT FIGHT TA *WIN??*

HYPOTHETICALLY, THAT'S *PEACHY*--BUT IF I GO DOWN *EASY,* I SAVE *MYSELF*--

--*PAUL, WINDA,* THE HOSPITAL--AN' MAYBE EVEN *BEV*-- A LOT OF *PAIN!*

YOU'VE TAKEN A DEFEATIST ATTITUDE, DUCKO!

IF MY IDEA PANS OUT--ONLY BONG'LL BE HURTIN'!

IRON MAN AUTO WRECKERS

CLAUDE STARK PROPRIETOR

SKREEECH

I'M FROM MISSOURI, LEE!

YEAH, WELL--I AIN'T ASKIN' YA TO RISK BODILY HARM ON FAITH, DUCKO! C'MON, I WANT YA TO MEET A FRIEND OF MINE!

A GENIUS WHEN IT COMES TA DEFENSIVE WAR-FARE AN' WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY!

IN A GARAGE??

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH, DUCKO! THERE AIN'T MUCH DEMAND FOR THE COMMODITIES WE NEED IN CLEVELAND, AFTER ALL!

HEY CLAUDE!!

RIGHT WITH YA, GOOD BUDDY!

SOON...

CLAUDE, MEET HOWARD--HOWARD, CLAUDE STARK-OWSKI.!

JUST STARK, LEE--JUST STARK.

ANY FRIEND OF LEE'S...!

AIN'TCHA GONNA SAY: "Y-YOU'RE A DUCK?!"

DON'T SEE WHY! 'SCUSE ME A SEC, GENTS!

CLAUDE--HOWIE'S GOT A PROBLEM!

DO TELL.

TELL, LEE DOES--THE ENTIRE LIFE OR DEATH SITUATION--AS HOWARD WONDERS WHAT HE'S GOTTEN INTO THIS TIME!

THEN...

I GET IT--YOU WANT ME T'BUILD HOWIE A SUIT OF ARMOR--

--JUST LIKE THE ONE I BUILT FOR IRON MAN!

WAUGGH! THAT DOES IT-- ANOTHER WACKO!

PLOP

S'LONG, LEE--I PREFER DEATH TO HUMILIATION!

DUCKO, WAIT! LISTEN TO ME--!

EXPERT REPAIRS

CLAUDE STARK PROPRIETO

NIX! WE CAME HERE TO GET ME A WEAPON TO USE AGAINST BONG--

--AN' SUDDENLY I'M IT!

HOW, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! CLAUDE'S GOING TO MAKE A WEAPON--BUT THE SUIT'S TO LET YOU LIVE LONG ENOUGH TA USE IT!

LEE--IT TAKES TIME TO BUILD A FUNCTIONAL EXO-SKELETON--AN' WE DON'T HAVE TIME!

SO HE'S A LITTLE OFF, DUCKO-- SO WHAT?

BESIDES, THIS BUTTERNUT THINKS HE'S OFFICIAL ARMORER TO THE AVENGERS!

"GIVE HIM A CHANCE, HUH?"

YOU GUYS CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME! I WAS MAKING AN IRON MAN SUIT FOR MY NEPHEW--

--ABOUT HOWIE'S SIZE! A FEW MODIFICATIONS AND IT SHOULD DO THE TRICK!

YEP--EVER SINCE I GOT A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL LODGED IN MY HEAD IN 'NAM--

--I'VE HAD A GOOD SIDELINE CREATING ARMOR FOR MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE SUPER-HERO!

SHELLHEAD DON'T MIND ME MAKING COPIES EITHER--LONG AS THEY'RE FOR A GOOD CAUSE!

GOT A COLOR PREFERENCE, HOWIE??

HOWARD ROLLS HIS EYES, GROANS--

--AND IS IMMEDIATELY CAUGHT UP IN THE **CREATIVE FRENZY** OF ONE **CLAUDE STARK**--SHELL-SHOCKED VIETNAM VETERAN AND **AMATEUR ARMORER!**

I GET **SCRAP TRANSISTORS** FROM **TONY STARK'S** CLEVELAND PLANT! THEY DON'T MIND ME HAULING THE STUFF AWAY--

'CAUSE IT'S PART OF THEIR **"BE KIND TO VETERANS"** PROGRAM!

I HEAR **STARK** ALMOST BOUGHT IT IN **'NAM**, TOO! HE MUST BE AN OKAY JOE --NOT AS **INVENTIVE** AS ME, OF COURSE!

(HEH-HEH) **OF COURSE!**

BUT THAT'S HOW IT HANGS, Y'KNOW! I MEAN--HE GOT THE **LOOKS**, I GOT THE **BRAINS!** EVEN-STEVEN, SEEMS TO ME!

AND INSPIRED BY THE URGENCY OF HOWARD'S **PERIL**, CLAUDE **WELDS** WELL INTO THE **AFTER-NOON!** TORCHES **HISS!** THE SHOP **RINGS** WITH THE CLAMOR OF **METAL** UPON **METAL!**

NICE, HUH? I HAD TO ALLOW FOR THE LOW BUDGET, OF COURSE--

--SPRINGS INSTEADA JETS, FLAME-THROWERS INSTEADA REPULSOR RAYS...!

DON'T APOLOGIZE, CLAUDE--IT'S A MASTERPIECE! RIGHT, DUCKO?

...GT MF OT HRE--!

WHAT? OH--TURN ON YOUR SUIT RADIO, HOW! WE CAN'T HEAR YOU!

AND...

I HOPE YER READIN' LOUD AN' CLEAR--'CAUSE I'M ONLY GONNA SAY THIS ONCE!

GET ME OUTTA HERE!!

DON'T PANIC, HOWIE--YOU CAN EVEN SMOKE IN THERE--ONCE THE AIR CONDITIONING CUTS IN!

MEANWHILE, I'VE COOKED UP A DOOZY OF A GIZMO TO STOP BONG FROM CREAMING YOU!

BONKING

YEAH? FIVE WOKS ARMED WITH SHISH KEBAB SKEWERS?

NAH--SONAR DISHES, HOWIE!

ARRANGED IN A CIRCLE, THEY'LL CREATE A SONIC FIELD--

--AND NULLIFY BONG'S OWN SONIC VI-BRATIONS!

WATCH!

HEFTING A BALL-PEEN HAMMER, CLAUDE STRIKES A REPLICA OF THE FAR-FAMED LIBERTY BELL!

NOW I PULL THIS SWITCH, ACTIVATING THE SONIC FIELD, AND...

UNTIL...

OKAY, HOWIE --SHE'S DONE. WANNA TRY HER ON?

NO!

C'MON --DON'T BE SHY!

WAUGGH

CLAUDE-- SHY ISN'T THE WORD!

?

AND, BORN OF FIRE AND STEEL, HEADLIGHT STABBING BRILLIANTLY INTO THE DARK OF ADVERSITY, LOINS GLEAMINGLY ARMOR-GIRDED FOR THE COMING STRUGGLE, STANDS...

IRON DUCK!

NNGGGGGGG

...VOILA! INSTANT SILENCE!

SO, ALL YOU GOTTA DO, HOWIE, IS KEEP THIS BONG DUDE TOO BUSY TO NOTICE THE SONIC FIELD--

--THEN, WHEN HE STEPS INTO IT... ZWEEP! PULL HIS PLUG!

BEFORE HE JUICES ME, HUH?

SOUNDS NUTS ENOUGH TO WORK, CLAUDE!

THEN LET'S TEST 'ER OUT, SHALL WE?

RIGHT!

FLAMETHROWERS CHECK OUT! TOO BAD BONG AIN'T GONNA BE AS EASY TO OFF AS A BIG MAC!

FWROOSH

YOU GOT NOTHIN' TO FEAR IF IT COMES TO HAND-TO-HAND, DUCKO!

TKLANG

SPROING SPROING

I HOPE IT DOESN'T COME TO THAT, LEE!

BUT IF IT DOES, I'VE GOT THE WHEREWITHAL T'LEAD BONG OUTTA THE HOSPITAL AN' OUT INTO THE OPEN--

--IF I CAN JUST GET THE HANG OF THESE BOOT-SPRINGS!!

BUT, GIVEN THE **PRESS** OF TIME, HOWARD'S **TRAINING PERIOD** IS ALL-TOO-SOON CUT SHORT!

I'VE STASHED THE **SONAR DISHES** IN THE **TRUNK**, HOWIE!

THANKS, CLAUDE--YOU MAY NOT BE PLAYING WITH A **FULL DECK**, BUT **HEARTS** ARE YOUR STRONG SUIT!

I'VE BEEN **HUMORIN'** HIM AN' LEE--DON'T WANT 'EM TO **WORRY**--

--EVEN THOUGH **I** KNOW BONG'S GONNA PAINT THE LAND-SCAPE WITH ME... WHEN HE GETS DONE **LAUGHIN'** AT MY "**ARMOR!**"

BUT THEY **TRIED**--AN' THAT'S WHAT **COUNTS**! NICE KNOWIN' THERE'LL BE **FRIENDS** MOURNIN' ME WHEN I BUY THE FARM!

HERE, HOWIE --ONE **FINAL** PRECAUTION!

COTTON BALLS! STUFF THEM IN YOUR **EARS** AND YOU WON'T BE **AFFECTED** BY BONG'S **SONIC POWERS!**

THEN, AS IT MUST, THE MOMENT OF **DEPARTURE** COMES!

'SLONG, GUYS! GIVE ME A **CALL** WHEN YOU WHUP THAT **BONG BUGGER!**

VROARR

AND AS THE VIOLET PALL OF **DUSK** EMBRACES THE WINDSWEPT STREETS OF **SKUDGE, PENNSYLVANIA**...

WE MADE GOOD TIME, DUCKO-- --WE'RE BACK AT LEAST AN **HOUR** BEFORE BONG'S DUE!

DO NOT ENTER

I DON'T SUPPOSE WE COULD SET THE CLOCKS AHEAD AND LEAVE HIM A **NOTE** THAT WE GOT TIRED OF WAITING AN' **SPLIT**?

I DIDN'T THINK SO

IT'S A TOUGH SITUATION, DUCKO-- BUT WE AIN'T **CAPTAINS** OF OUR **FATES**, Y'KNOW!

LEE--I AIN'T EVEN A **CABIN BOY!**

YEH--I SUPPOSE YOU DO HAVE IT HARDER THAN MOST, BEIN' SHORT AN' A DUCK AN' ALL!

BUT THIS IS WHERE YOU SHOW WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF! HEH-HEH --BONG IS IN FOR A SURPRISE WHEN HE FINALLY SHOWS UP!

BUT, SUDDENLY...

HOWARD--?

T-THAT VOICE! AW, COME ON. I-IT CAN'T BE--

BOONGGG

I DIDN'T WANT TO KEEP YOU WAITING, HOWARD--

SO I CAME EARLY!!

WAAUGHH!

SHALL WE BEGIN, FOWL??

NEXT: The FINAL BONG!

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

HOWARD THE DUCK®

TM

THE FINAL BONG!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!

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QUIET
HOSPITAL
ZONE

QUAKE WITHIN YOUR MISBEGOTTEN *BATTLE ARMOR,* HOWARD--FOR TODAY SHALL *TOLL...*
THE
FINAL BONG!

WAAUKK

*ENCASED WITHIN THE CUT-RATE **IRON DUCK** ARMOR CREATED FOR HIM BY **CLAUDE STARKOWSKI**--PENNILESS AMATEUR ARMORER AND SHELL-SHOCKED VIETNAM VETERAN...*

LG
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*...HOWARD FACES HIS MOST FEARSOME FOE IN THE SHADOWED CORRIDORS OF **SKUDGE HOSPITAL!***

BONG SURPRISED US BY SHOWIN' UP EARLY--AN' HE PARALYZED LEE BEFORE HE COULD ACTIVATE THE ***SONIC FIELD*** THAT WAS S'POSED TO NULLIFY BONG'S ***SOUNDWAVES!***

ME--I CAN'T HEAR A BLASTED WORD HE'S SQUAWKIN' BECAUSE OF THE ***COTTON BALLS*** CLAUDE STUFFED IN MY EARS--*

*LAST ISH.--JIM.

--BUT I CAN ***GUESS*** WHAT'S NEXT ON THE ***AGENDA!***

SWISSH

HOLD, DUCK! STAND YOUR GROUND!

THIS IS JUST WHAT I WANTED TO AVOID! I MUST'VE BEEN OUTTA MY ***GOURD*** TO LET LEE AN' CLAUDE TALK ME INTO ***FIGHTIN'*** THIS BELL-HEADED BOZO--

NO SMOKING IN PATIENTS ROOM

--WHEN I COULD'A JUST ***SURRENDERED*** AN' LET HIM KILL ME ***PAINLESSLY***-- WITHOUT EN-DANGERIN' ***PAUL, WINDA***...OR ANY-ONE ELSE IN THE HOSPITAL!

SPROING

NOW IT'S TOO LATE! BONG LEARNED THAT HIS SHOTGUN WEDDING TO ***BEV*** DIDN'T MAKE HER CHANGE HER FEELINGS ABOUT YOURS TRULY--

AN' SO BONG'S HORMONES GOT THE BEST OF HIM...AN' HE HAD TO PROVE HIS **MANHOOD** BY CHALLENGIN' ME TO THIS ONE-SIDED DEATH-DUEL!

BOONNNGG

I SAID-- **HOLD!**

:WAAUGH: I--I FELT **THAT** ONE RIGHT THROUGH CLAUDE'S SOUPED-UP **SARDINE CAN!**

BUT THE ROLLING AND TOLLING FROM THE GOOD DOCTOR'S HORRIFYING **HEADPIECE** DO FAR MORE THAN MERELY LIFT OUR FOWL OFF THE FLOOR.

THE TERRIFYING TINTINABULATIONS ALSO THROW AN IMPENETRABLE **GARDOL SHIELD** ABOUT SKUDGE HOSPITAL.

NNNNGG

THE AIR **PALPITATES** VISIBLY AND THE HOSPITAL IS CUT OFF FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD!

WHILE, **TRAPPED** INSIDE...

CRASH

MY TRANSISTORIZED **WINDSHIELD WIPERS** ARE CUTTIN' IN--JUST LIKE CLAUDE SAID THEY WOULD!

MAYBE IF I MOVE FAST ENOUGH I CAN BOUNCE OUTTA HERE BEFORE HIS **SONIC SHIELD** SOLIDIFIES!

B-BUT IF I **DO**-- BONG'LL JUST THROW A **TANTRUM** AN' LEVEL THE HOSPITAL--

--AN' USE THE **POWER OF THE PRESS** TO BRAND ME A **COWARD** FOR DESERTING PAUL AN' WINDA!*

SKUDGE TIMES

FOWL ABANDONS FRI

HOSPITAL DESTROY

*STILL RECOVERING FROM THE RINGMASTER'S GAMBIT IN **HTD** #26. --JS.

AWRIGHT--I'M CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCKHEAD AN' A HARD PLACE...I MIGHT AS WELL *FIGHT BACK!*

I'VE BEEN TAKIN' GRIEF FROM EVERY HAIRLESS MALCONTENT TO COME DOWN THE PIKE SINCE THE *COSMIC AXIS* SHIFTED!

IT'S TIME I STARTED DISHIN' OUT A LITTLE *ANXIETY* OF MY OWN!

WOOSH

*IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE HE COMMANDED THE **FLAMES OF FALTINE** AS THE EXPEDIENTLY-CHOSEN ONE OF DOCTOR STRANGE...**

*THE WITHERING FIRE FROM HIS TRANSISTOR-IZED PALM-UNIT IS A MORE WORLDLY **CHEM-ICAL REACTION** DESIGNED TO GIVE HOWARD A MOMENTARY **CHASE ADVANTAGE!***

WHAT LIGHT FROM YONDER *FINGER* BREAKS--??

BACK OFF, DOC--OR I'LL SIZZLE YOUR *SOCKS!*

BUT, DESPITE HOWARD'S RETALIATORY PYROTECHNICS...

YOU AMUSE ME, FOWL! I SEE THERE IS SOME BASIS FOR BEVERLY'S HIGH REGARD OF YOU--

BOONH

**SEE HOWARD THE DUCK TREASURY EDITION #1.--JIM.*

--BUT I CANNOT ALLOW PROFESSIONAL ADMIRATION OF YOUR COURAGE TO INTERFERE WITH MY PERSONAL NEED TO CLAIM THE UNDIVIDED AFFECTION OF MY ***WIFE!***

AND, WITH YOU DEAD-- BEVERLY WILL NEVER AGAIN HAVE TO ***CHOOSE*** BETWEEN US!

NNNGGGG

L-LOOKS LIKE I'M GONNA RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF WHAT ***ONE HAND CLAPPING*** SOUNDS LIKE!

DING-DONG'S ***BONG*** HAS ANIMATED THE ENTIRE EMERGENCY WARD--

--AN' IT'S COMIN' ***ON THE HOOF!***

CLANK

CRASH

FROM BENEATH THE STILL-SETTLING PILE OF PHARMACEUTICAL EQUIPMENT, A FEEBLE ***SEARCHLIGHT*** BEAMS...

...WHICH SERVES TO GUIDE THE DIABOLICAL DOCTOR BONG DIRECTLY TO OUR FLATTENED FOWL!

EVEN YOUR ARMOR ***BETRAYS*** YOU, HOWARD!

YOU FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT-- BUT IT'S TIME FOR THE ***FINAL CHIME***...THE MUFFLED MOURNING MELODY OF YOUR ***FUNERAL DIRGE!***

I'VE BEEN LAID OUT--BUT NOT **FROZEN** LIKE LEE!

AN' AS LONG AS I CAN MOVE, I CAN STILL ACTIVATE--

CLICK

--MY WHIRLING **BUTT-BIT!**

RRRR

FURIOUSLY, THE DIAMOND-TIPPED **DRILL-BIT** BITES THROUGH THE CORRIDOR **FLOOR...**

...AND, BEFORE BONG CAN RE-ACT, THE **BOTTOM DROPS OUT!**

CLAUDE, YOU GOOFBALL-- **BLESS** YA!

SPROOING

NO SMOKING

--AN' BACK TO BONG!

WH-WHOOAA! I L-LANDED ON M-MY BOOT-SPRINGS! I-I'M BOUNCING OUT OF C-CONTROL--

--RIGHT UP THE CELLAR STAIRS--

BOOING

BOOINNG

AH--SO THE DROPOUT DROPS BACK **IN!** A CLEVER MANEUVER, DUCK--

--BUT ONE WHICH--IN THE DEVALUED CURRENCY OF **COURAGE**--HAS BOUGHT YOU MERE **MOMENTS** OF CONTINUED LIFE!

KEEP CHATTERIN', CHIME-FACE! I CAN'T HEAR A **WORD** YER SAYIN'!

BUT UNLESS YA BEEN NEGLECTIN' YER **AURAL HYGIENICS**--

ZZZ

UMPAH PAW HOOM!

--THERE AIN'T NO WAY IN THE WORLD YER GONNA MISS HEARIN'... *THIS!*

HIROSHIMA, MON AMOUR!

NO! CEASE THIS AWFUL CACOPHONY--I COMMAND IT!

RELENTLESSLY JOINING WIRES TO COMPLETE THE **CIRCUIT** WHICH ACTIVATES THE FIVE **SONAR DISHES,** HOWARD GRINS IN **TRIUMPH!**

BUT IT IS SHORT-LIVED--FOR, AT THAT MOMENT IN INVENTOR CLAUDE STARK'S CLEVELAND GARAGE...

HEY--I FORGOT TO INSTALL A **BATTERY** IN ONE OF THE SONIC DISHES! GEE, I HOPE HOWIE AN' LEE DON'T MIND!

YOUR LITTLE TOY APPEARS TO HAVE BLOWN A *FUSE!*

I SEEM TA HEAR A LITTLE VOICE SAYIN: "I *TOLD* YA SO!"

BONG'S SIDLIN' IN FOR THE *KILL*-- I GUESS THIS IS THE *LAST GOOD-BYE* UNLESS...*WAIT!* CLAUDE SAID HE INSTALLED SOMETHING IN MY HIP POD--

--TO BE USED ONLY IN CASE OF *MORTAL DANGER!*

HMMM--CLAUDE'S NOTHIN' IF HE AIN'T LITERAL...BUT THIS AIN'T NO TIME TA QUIBBLE!

IN CASE OF MORTAL DANGER BREAK GLASS!

'CAUSE I'VE REACHED THE HIM-ALAYAN HILTON AS FAR AS *LAST RESORTS* GO!

SMASH

*WITH A SPEED BORN OF DESPERATION, THE MALLET-WIELDING MALLARD LEAPS AT HIS ADVERSARY'S **HEAD**...*

PING

BUT IF I'M CHECKIN' OUT, I'M TAKIN' BONG WITH ME!

HOWARD, IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY--??

GONGIN' YOUR BONGER WORKED ONCE BEFORE, DOC-*

*HTD #20.--JIM.

--AN' I'M WILLIN' TO TRY FOR SLOPPY SECONDS!

"HEAR THE LOUD **ALARUM BELL**--BRAZEN BELL! **WHAT** A TALE OF TERROR, NOW, ITS TURBULENCY TELLS!"

PFFT

BUT, ALL *LITERATA* ASIDE--
WHEN THE SOUNDWAVES CLEAR, A STIFF LEE SWITZLER MAKES A DUAL DISCOVERY...

BONG AN' HOWARD ARE **GONE!** HOWIE **SACRIFICED** HIMSELF TO SAVE SKUDGE!

BEG YOUR PARDON?

201-21

NO SMOK ENTS R

DID YOU SAY SOME-THING, LADY?

WHAT? I CAN'T **HEAR** YOU!

IT WILL TAKE AWHILE FOR THE TEMPORARY DEAFNESS CAUSED BY DR. BONG'S SUDDEN DEPARTURE TO WEAR OFF...

...BUT, RATHER THAN WAIT FOR THOSE OF YOU SIMILARY EFFECTED TO **RECOVER**, WE SUGGEST YOU LEARN TO READ LIPS WHILE WE CATCH UP TO OUR ANTAGONISTS IN THE HIMALAYAN STRONG-HOLD OF **DR. BONG!!**

WHIP

WHERE A MAN'S HOME IS, INDEED, HIS CASTLE!

I HAD NOT ANTICIPATED THIS, FOWL--BUT I COULD NOT HAVE PLANNED IT BETTER!

HERE--ON MY HOME TURF--I CAN DESTROY YOU BEFORE THE BABY BLUE EYES OF MY BELOVED **BEVERLY!**

BONNNGG

=W-WAAUKK!!=

BWAM

STRANGE--BEVERLY COULD NOT HAVE **MISSED** HEARING OUR ARRIVAL!

BOONNNG

BUT **OUR** BUSINESS, HOWARD, CANNOT **WAIT.** I WILL START BY PEALING AWAY YOUR LUDICROUS **ARMOR** AS CLEOPATRA PEELED CAESAR'S GRAPES!

THUS I SHALL DESTROY YOU BY FIRST STRIPPING YOU OF YOUR **SELF-IMAGE!**

AND, I HAVE MADE IT A RULE THAT SHE BE HERE TO GREET ME BEARING MY PIPE AND SLIPPERS! BUT NO MATTER! SHE WILL BE ALONG PRESENTLY, I IMAGINE.

BEFORE BONG'S CLAMOROUS ASSAULT...

...HOWARD'S **IRON DUCK** ARMOR BEGINS TO COME APART AT THE SEAMS!

÷WAAAAUGH÷

--AND HOWARD, HOPING HIS SECOND HIP-POD ALSO HOLDS A HIDDEN **FAILSAFE DEVICE**...

...PRESSES THE POD'S STUD--

RIVETS RATTLE, PIPES POP, BATTERIES BURST, IN THE WAKE OF BONG'S SINISTER **SOUNDWAVES**--

--BUT MERELY SUCCEEDS IN ACTIVATING HIS ARMOR'S MAGNETIC **UN-COUPLER!**

POOINNG

BOOINNG

YOU'RE **COOKED,** DUCK!

A-ARMOR'S B-BEIN' R-RECALLED F-FASTER TH-THAN A F-FORD P-PINTO E-EQUIPPED W-WITH ***F-FIRESTONE 500's!***

G-GOTTA TRY A FINAL GAMBIT-- WHILE I STILL CAN! MY SEARCH-BEAM--IF I CAN *BLIND* BONGO...!

TWANG

WOULDN'T YA *KNOW* IT?!

NOW WHAT DESPERATE PLOY--? *YEEOWW!*

THUD

I GUESS THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YER MIND'S CLEARED OF EVERYTHING BUT *PANIC!*

I'LL SEE YOU *PLUCKED* FOR THIS, FOWL!

ZZZ

HE'S GOING TO LEARN THAT *THE PEN* IS A DOUBLE-EDGED *WEAPON* --IT GOES BOTH WAYS!

NEEZ?

AND *THIS* LITTLE BIT OF YELLOW JOURNALISM IS GOING TO *CLEVELAND* AS FAST AS OUR FRIEND'S LITTLE *LLAMA* CAN CARRY IT!

MUSH, PAL... AND DON'T STOP AT SHANGRI-LA!

SNAP

AH--THE UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE ACCORDED A DOCTOR'S WIFE...IT'LL BE HARD GIVING IT UP!

BUT NOT *TOO* HARD! C'MON, GUYS AND GALS-- BRING THE *CRUCIBLE!*

NEEZ!

BLAST! THAT TABLE WAS HALF OF A MATCHING SET! HOLD STILL, HOWARD--I'M WARNING YOU!

--BUT I GUARANTEE YOU, IT IS NOT IN YOUR OWN BEST INTEREST TO HAVE ME *ANGRY* WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON YOU!

BONNGG

YOU MAY THINK ONE DEATH IS AS PAINFUL AS ANOTHER NOW--

TH-THIS IS *IT!* I C-CAN F-FEEL IT C-COMIN'...

THE END OF IRON DUCK!!

SPRANG

SPROING

SPROING

IN MERE SECONDS, CLAUDE STARK'S LABOR OF LOVE BECOMES NOTHING MORE THAN SO MUCH **SCRAP IRON**...

...AND HOWARD STANDS HELPLESSLY REVEALED!

UH--**DRAFTY** PLACE YA GOT HERE, DOC!

COTTON IN YOUR EARS, HOWARD? SO **THAT** IS HOW YOU AVOIDED BEING PARALYZED BY MY BONGS!

HEH-HEH... YEAH-- IT WAS CHEAPER THAN EAR MUFFS!

VERY FUNNY, HOWARD. A REAL **KNEE-SLAPPER!**

YOUR **LAST**, I'M AFRAID.

ENOUGH! LISTEN CLOSELY, DUCK: THE **NEXT SOUND** YOU HEAR WILL BE--

LESTER!

BEVERLY!

TOOTS--IS IT REALLY YOU??

YEAH--THANKS FOR COMIN' TO *RESCUE* ME, DUCKY!

GOOD THING I DIDN'T HOLD MY BREATH!

STILL, I CAN'T LET MY GONG SHOW HUSBAND KILL YOU--OR ANYBODY! THAT'S WHY I WHIPPED UP THIS LITTLE *SURPRISE* FOR YOU IN THE *EVOLVO-CHAMBER*, LESTER!

IS THIS SOME KIND OF *JOKE*, BEVERLY?

NOPE! MEET THE *BONG QUINTUPLETS*, CHROME-DOME! SAY HELLO TO *DADDY*, KIDS!

YOU ACE *HOWARD*, LESTER--AND THE WHOLE WORLD WILL *KNOW* YOU FOR WHAT YOU *ARE!*

IMAGINE THE *BAD P.R.* LESTER'LL GET WHEN IT'S SHOWN THAT HE'S A *NEGLIGENT FATHER*...ABANDONING HIS WIFE AND KIDDIES WHILE HE'S OUT CONQUERING THE WORLD!

BEV--*HOW??*

I *CLONED* THE QUINTS IN THE *EVOLVO-CHAMBER* FROM ONE OF LESTER'S *NAIL-CLIPPINGS!*

NO! **NO!** I DENY RESPONSIBILITY! WHY--WE HAVE YET TO EVEN **CONSUMMATE** OR MARRIAGE!

WHOSE FAULT IS THAT?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO INSISTED ON RECITING POE'S **"THE BELLS"** EVERY NIGHT 'TIL **DAWN!**

÷YECCH÷

YOU **DARE** SAY THAT IN FRONT OF THIS...THIS **DUCK?!**

YOU HAVE GONE **TOO FAR,** BEVERLY!

÷WAAAUGH÷

GO AHEAD, LESTER--**BONG** 'TIL YOUR **BRAINS** FALL OUT!

BUT IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO HOWARD OR ME--THIS **HEADLINE** WILL APPEAR ON TO-MORROW'S CLEVELAND PLAIN-DEALER! KNOCK QUITE A HOLE IN YOUR **IMAGE,** WON'T IT, LESTER?

CLEVELAND PLAIN-DEALER

BONG NEGLIGENT FATHER ABANDONS QUINTUPLETS

SPORTS PAGE 3ª

AND, AFTER ALL--**YOU'RE** THE ONE WHO SAID **IMAGE** IS ALL!

NO! I MEAN--**YES!** I HAVE BEEN BETRAYED! DELILAH! JEZEBEL! JUDAS! ERLICHMAN! HALDEMAN!

HEY--NAME-CALLING ISN'T GOING TO ACCOMPLISH ANY-THING! CAN'T WE SETTLE THIS LIKE **ADULTS...?**

I THINK YOU'RE GIVIN' LESTER TOO MUCH CREDIT, TOOTS!

BEGONE!

WHNG

KLIP BOOT

A FLASH OF LIGHT, A CRASH OF **SOUND,** AND A HEARTY **"HI-YO, SILVER BELLS!"--**

--AND HOWARD, PAUL SAME, WANDA WESTER AND BEVERLY SWITZLER ARE REUNITED FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE DR. BONG'S ASSAULT ON THE PLEASURE CRUISER, THE S.S. DAMNED!*

HOWIE! BEV! YOU'RE SAFE!

THAT MEANS --IT'S ALL OVER!

OH, GOWWY GEE! LOOK-- I'M SO HAPPY THAT I'VE FUWWY WECOVERED!

THAT MAKES ONE OF US, WINDA!

ALL EXCEPT THE READJUSTMENT TO REALITY, LEE!

IF YA CAN CALL THIS REALITY!

HI, UNCLE LEE!

THUS, THOUGH THE COMATOSE PAUL SLEEPS ON--THE CORRIDORS OF SKUDGE HOSPITAL RING WITH THE JOYOUS SOUNDS OF REUNION!

*SEE HTD #15.--JIM.

WHILE, IN THE HIGH HIMALAYAS...

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU IDIOTS --HEAT UP THEIR FORMULA!

NEEZ?

NEEZ!

TINKLE CHIME

AND, IN THE OFFICES OF A CERTAIN CLEVELAND NEWSPAPER...

YA SAY THIS CAME BY LLAMA EARLY THIS MORNING, RILEY?

YEAH-- C.O.D., TOO!

ONG NEGLIGENT FATHER ABANDONS QUINTUPLETS

SHEESH! FIRST THE DACRON REPUBLICAN-DEMOCRAT, NOW THIS!

I'M ASKIN' YA-- DON'T THEY HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO OVER AT NATIONAL LAMPOON??

NEAHGE

the end

SEE OUR LETTERS PAGE FOR AN EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT!

Howard the Duck #30's letters page reported on Steve Gerber's departure from the series and announced that Howard's color comic would *not* be cancelled...

WISE QUACKS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MIGHTY MARVEL BULLPEN

Good news. Bad news. Them changes.

First, the good news: Despite wildly spreading rumors, HOWARD THE DUCK will *not* be canceled. *HTD* will survive in its present 35¢ color-comic form. It will not be replaced by a $1.50 magazine-format package, though the possibilities of its being *joined* by such a companion mag in the future are not entirely ruled out. So, for all our fans who have expressed consternation about even the suggestion of *HTD*'s demise... fear not!

Next, the bad news: Steve Gerber, the man who gave voice and soul to HOWARD way back in ADVENTURES INTO FEAR #19, has left his position as Writer-Editor. We share with you the deepest respect for Steve's brilliant accomplishments. Under his guidance, HOWARD THE DUCK grew as a book that stood out in the crush, a book that shone with a creative light all its own. Steve's work will be missed.

Them changes: Steve's departure necessitated the fill-in stories of the previous issues, though Steve helped mold them into *HTD*'s continuity. Starting this ish, GENE (The Dean) COLAN is back as penciler without peer. The scripting chores on HOWARD have passed on to Boisterous BILL MANTLO, writer of more Marvel titles in his time than could possibly be enumerated in this short space. The gentlemen in question are, to tell the truth, tickled pink at the thought of chronicling Howard's future perambulations down the primrose path of life. Judging by their first joint endeavor (this issue's return of the devastating Dr. Bong) we think you'll find the satire, social commentary and side-splitting humor of HOWARD THE DUCK continuing in the manner you've come to expect. But then, you'll let us *know* if we're wrong. Right?

Messrs. Gerber & Colan,

This duck...this pitiful excuse for a duck. Gentlemen, you could have made of him another "Dopey Duck" (HTD #5). You could have twisted him into a sorry three-joke-a-panel caricature of a duck. But, nooooo...you took this duck, named him Howard, and vested in him the gift of insight into the foibles of society. A duck. A satirical duck. A...*duck?*

Far out.

Jeremy J. Lichtenstein
135 Arlington Drive
Libertyville, IL 60048

Dear Marvel,

Steve Gerber remains Marvel's finest writer—one whose talented prose I've followed since FEAR #10—the Man-Thing. What will he be up to now? I see the Man-Thing popping up again lately—HTD #'s 22 and 23, MARVEL TEAM-UP #68, MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #43. How about more Gerber Man-Thing tales? In GIANT SIZE MAN-THING #3, Korrek became the Kathartan king upon the murder of his father. He is still destined for godhood, is he not? Jennifer Kale is apprentice-no-more since the death of Dakumh (although he's still around). She is a sorceress herself now, unless I'm mistaken. Perhaps Jennifer, Korrek, Man-Thing, Dakimh—any one or all of the above—could get mags of their own?

Rob Fagerlund
1012 Homewild
Jackson, MI 49201

Sorry space considerations forced us to truncate your letter, Rob (which you sneakily sent to *HTD* although it was really a MAN-THING missive, you devil!). But, seriously, things seem to be in the wind regarding your favorite muck monster. We're not at liberty to divulge yet, but...well, keep watching.

Dear Marvel,

Here's a question for you. I'm surprised nobody's ever asked it before: Does Howard talk in a *duck* voice, or what?

Bob Berry
1629 Baxter Avenue
Superior, WI 54880

Pardon us for asking, Bob—but just what does a *duck* voice sound like?

Dear Steve and Gene,

I think that HOWARD THE DUCK is a great creation. Most of your readers, I gather, are American. I'm British, and not many British kids read your mag. I may start a Howard the Duck fan club to change that. In fact, I'm going to tell my friends to tell their friends to buy *HTD*. Leigh Russell, a pal of mine, asked me if Howard was Donald Duck's cousin. What a stupid question! Howard's friends, Bev and Paul, ought to have their own comic. I know that sounds mad but they are almost as good as Howard himself. I end with an endorsement: Whether in America or England, make sure that you get your copy of HOWARD THE DUCK. You'll go "quackers" if you miss it!

Kevin Bignell
3 Gunner Lane, Rubery, Birmingham
B45-9EP, England

Uh...right.

NEXT ISSUE: Howard faces the devastating Dr. Bong in the high Himalayas...and only Bev can save him!

...but no such luck. The issue #31 letters page declared the Duck dead...*and* not dead. Howard's black-and-white title would run nine issues, ending in March 1981.

WISE QUACKS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Friends,

Hitched out of NYC Tuesday the 27th and just picked up HTD #27 here in Pueblo, Colorado in order to get change for the bus. I've never written to you before, tho' yours is my favorite comic book (mostly by default—I got tired of SHAZAM). This ish made me expound, however. Steve Gerber is getting a better handle on Great Personal Spiritual Comic Book literature with each issue, and Gene Colan has always been one of the most *fun* artists to look at; everything just flows, and speedily! It's like riding down an interstate. Hail Marvel, where the intellect breathes! (And breeds.)

Sparrow

As we announced last ish, Spar—Steve has moved onto other paths, and *HTD*, starting with this issue, will be scripted by BILL MANTLO. Hope the changing of the guard won't slow your speed along the great two-lane blacktop of life.

Dear Marvel,

HTD #26 brought out the real Howard. Honed by his concern for Paul (when Paul was shot by Ignatz) and his anger about Winda's lacerations and trauma, his sarcasm became even more biting than ever. Its sharpest edge came when he said: "Aww, look! Poor Ringo's hat got killed!" (I hope Paul Same isn't dead or dying).

I hope you'll be bringing back Winky-Man, the deadly Space Turnip and, of course, the Kidney Lady. Also, what happened to Howard's fighting skills? Does he still know Quak-Fu?

Jimmy Koput
393 St. Clarens Avenue
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6H-3W2

All of the above will soon be written back into the continuity of HTD, Jim. As for Howard's knowledge of the martial arts, unless constantly practiced they, like everything else, atrophy. But in times of great stress. . .who knows?

Dear Marvel,

Okay, you guys—it's No-Prize time again! Take a gander at HTD #25, page 22, last panel. Winda says she is going to "sociawize". Her 3rd-to-last word has no lithp (lisp) on it. Instead of *lwis*; it's printed as *Iris*. Don't, I repeat, do not blame this on a typo or claim that Winda is talking normally for once in her life; just send me my rightfully-mine no-prize. Oh yeah, as an afterthought, the story was excellent and the art was superbly, phantasmagorically. . .so-so.

Gordon Springle
RR#1, Limehouse, Ontario
Canada LOP-1H

Sorry, Gordon. . .but Winda was (a) either talking normally for once in her life, or (b) you spotted a typo (Typographical Error— Editor). So there.

Dear Marvel,

I was sitting here reading HTD #26 and I was wondering—would it be possible for Howard to team up with the Thing, say in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, or Spider-Man in MARVEL TEAM-UP? I think it would make for a fantastic story, an I'm sure other Howard fans think so, too. Another one of my wondrous ideas is, why not make a "WHAT IF. . .?" issue about Howard, such as "What If Howard the Duck had Stayed a Human?", or "What If Howard the Duck had Real Super Powers like Spider-Man, the Hulk, Fantastic Four, Etc?".

Steve Chapman
Box 255, 490 Alice Street
Southhampton, Ontario, Canada NOH-2LO

Who's ETC., Steve? As for your suggestions, well. . .Howard became the Invincible IRON DUCK last ish, Bill Mantlo and MARVEL TEAM-UP scripter Chris Claremont are chafing to do a Howard/Spider-Man crossover, and Bill's already spoken to Marvelous Marv Wolfman about guest-starring the FANTASTIC FOUR in an upcoming issue of HTD. It's all in the cards, as they say.

Dear Marvel,

I am a seventeen year old—probably an eighteen year old by the time you read this—who has been an avid fan of H the D since HTD #3. I immensely enjoy reading the exploits of our little feathered friend. HTD is the only newly-published comic mag that I do read. Lately, though, there are many questions arising out of your many-sided storyline that I'd like to see clarified. Here they are, numbered for conveniences' sake: (1) Whatever happened to that crazy character at the end of HTD #14? Is he coming back, or did you just forget about him? (Mind you, I wouldn't care if you forgot—I think it was a rotten joke.) (2) Speaking of lost souls. . .where are the Soofi? Are they still out there trying to Save Their Children from Smut and Such? (3) And Anita? Where might the Supreme Soofi be now that the Baptists have turned her down? (4) What became of Mildred Horowitz and his band? Did they explode or something along the line? (5) Will the Reverend Moon (Ooops!) Joon Moon Yuc make a return appearance? With his Yuccies, perhaps? (6) Where does the phrase "And I have miles to go before I sleep" come from?—HTD #19. (7) When will your letterers learn to use the lower-case letters of our alphabet? (8) And, lastly, why do you insist on calling Howard a duck? You have but to look closely to see that he's a *drake*, not a duck.

Steven Gayes
1300 SW Terrace
Plantation FL 33317

In order, Steve: (1) Search us. Probably. (Sorry.) (2) See Answer #1, Question #1. Ditto. (3) Dade County, Florida. See Answer #1, Question #1 and Footnote #1, Question #2. (4) See Answer #1, Question #1; Footnote #1, Question #2; and Footnote #1, Question #3. (5) Unfortunately. Perhaps. (6) Robert Frost. (7) Probably never. (8) Pure semantics. (Have you no shame??)

THE DUCK IS DEAD!

You hold in your hands the *last* issue of HOWARD THE DUCK — the color comic, that is. Why? Howard has, in his short career, become one of the most controversial comic characters ever conceived. You knew it. We knew it. Only problem was—our retailers didn't. They thought this was "just another funny animal book" and ol' Howie often found himself trapped on a newsrack he never fit. And so, you, our discerning reader, often missed HTD, while the bubble gum brigade got stuck with a book whose scintillating satire was over their heads. Our intended, sophisticated readers were often frustrated, and there were a *lot* of confused little kiddies running around. We think HOWARD THE DUCK is too good a character to let slide into comics limbo, just because folks who wanted Howie couldn't find him, so we took a good look at the situation, and decided—

THE DUCK IS NOT DEAD!

Two short months from now will see the premiere of the new HOWARD THE DUCK magazine, an all-new $1 bi-monthly black-and-white sixty-four page extravaganza. We felt with a magazine format, we'd solve our problem with well-meaning but confused retailers—opening their eyes to the fact that *our* Duck is a very *special* Duck. The first issue of the HOWARD THE DUCK magazine will feature the same brand of excitement and chicanery Howard is known for, imagineered by *Bill Mantlo* and illuminated by *Michael Golden* and *Gene Colan*, plus the best articles and features this side of Duck Heaven. So, Duckophiles, flock to your favorite newsstand in sixty days, and show us your true feathers! Support our fowl works!

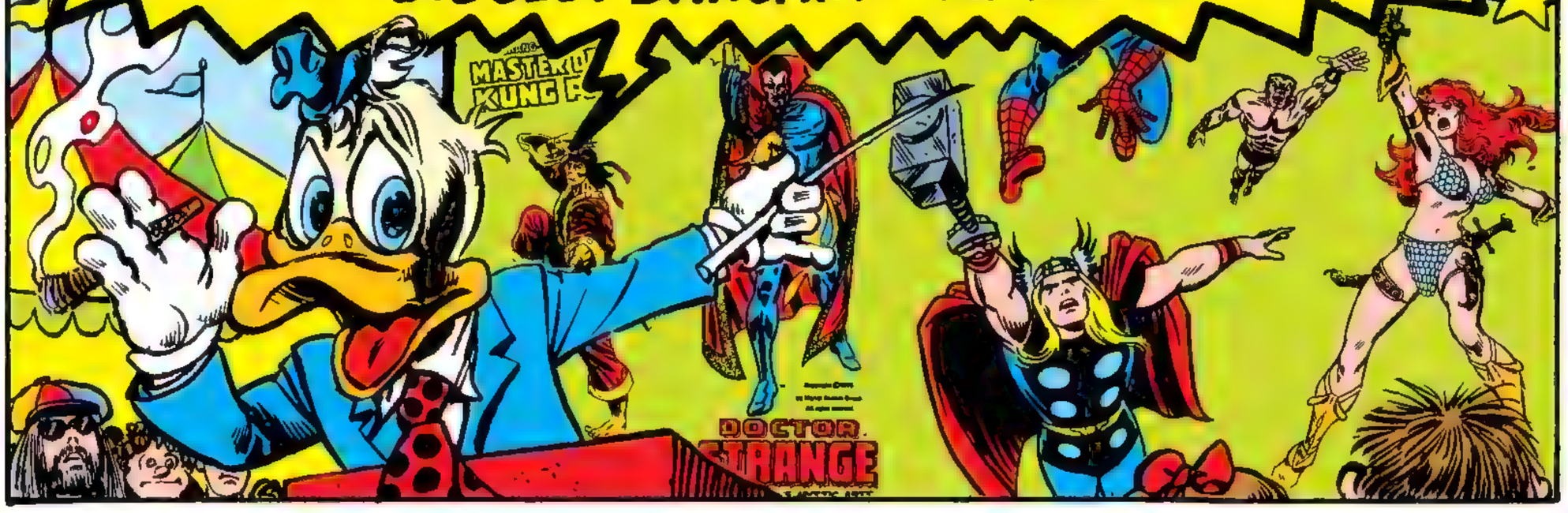
THE DUCK IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE DUCK!

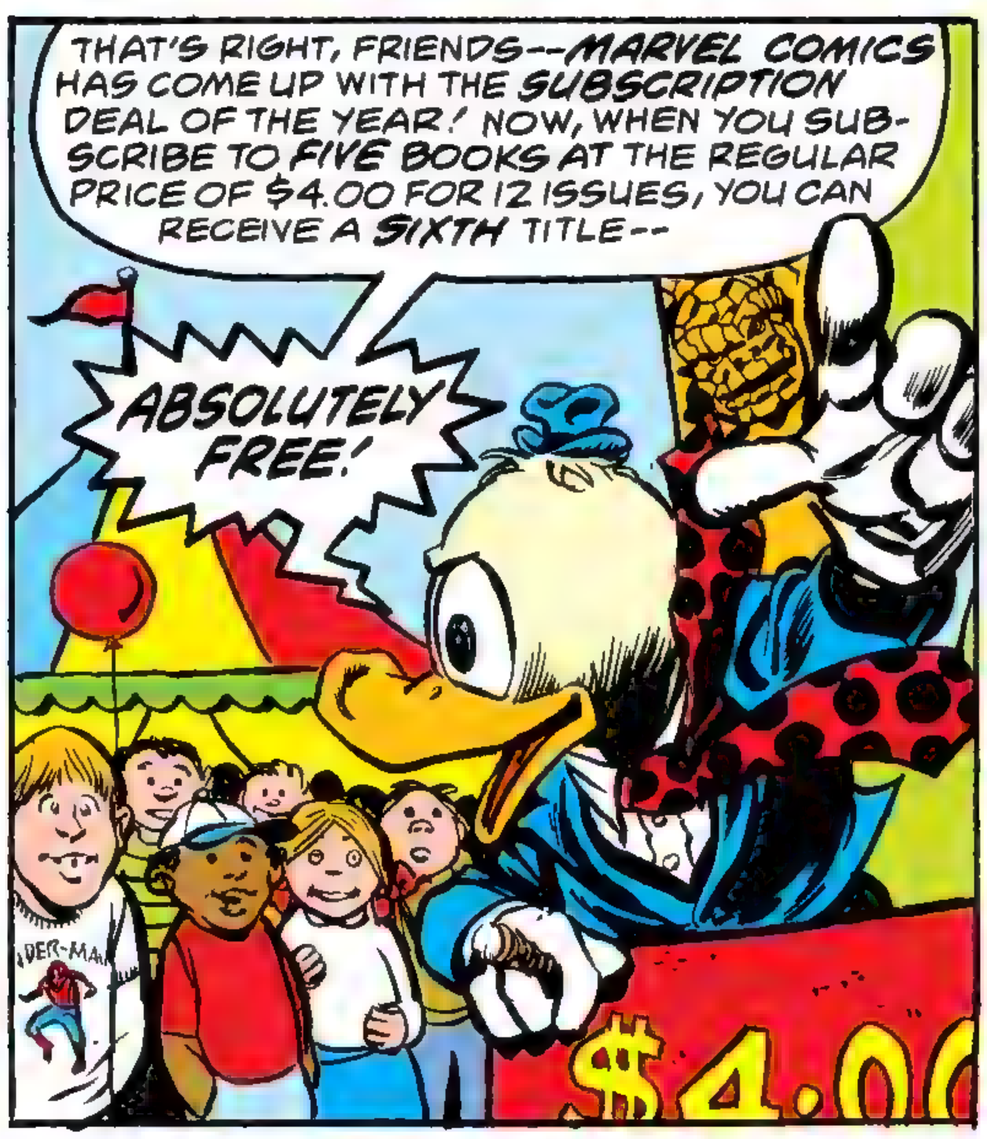
Howard hawked Marvel's latest subscription offers in this house ad featured in November 1977 titles.

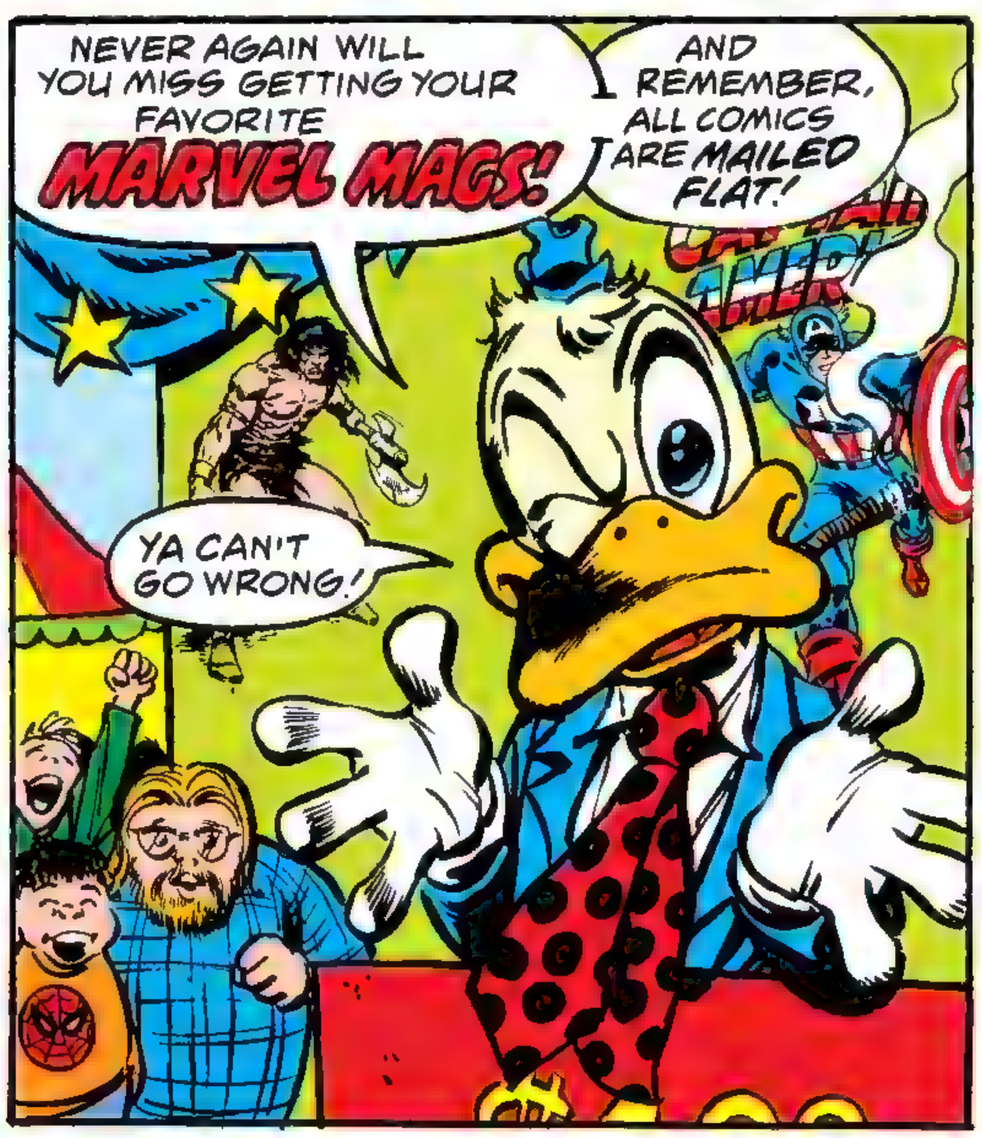
SPECIAL OFFER-- LAST CHANCE TO SUBSCRIBE AT OLD PRICES!

SIX TITLES FOR THE PRICE of FIVE--

IT'S THE BIGGEST BARGAIN IN COMICS...







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☐ INVADERS "
☐ IRON MAN "
☐ MARVEL TALES Featuring Spider-Man "
☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP Spider-Man vs "
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☐ MASTER OF KUNG FU "
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Please send to. JUL.-77
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Count me in! I don't wanna worry about having my local store sell out of the comics I want before I get there! Please send me subs to all the titles I've checked! Allow 10 weeks for delivery of 1st issue

All prices for 12 issues $4 00.

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Enclosed is $ _____ Please—Checks or money orders only

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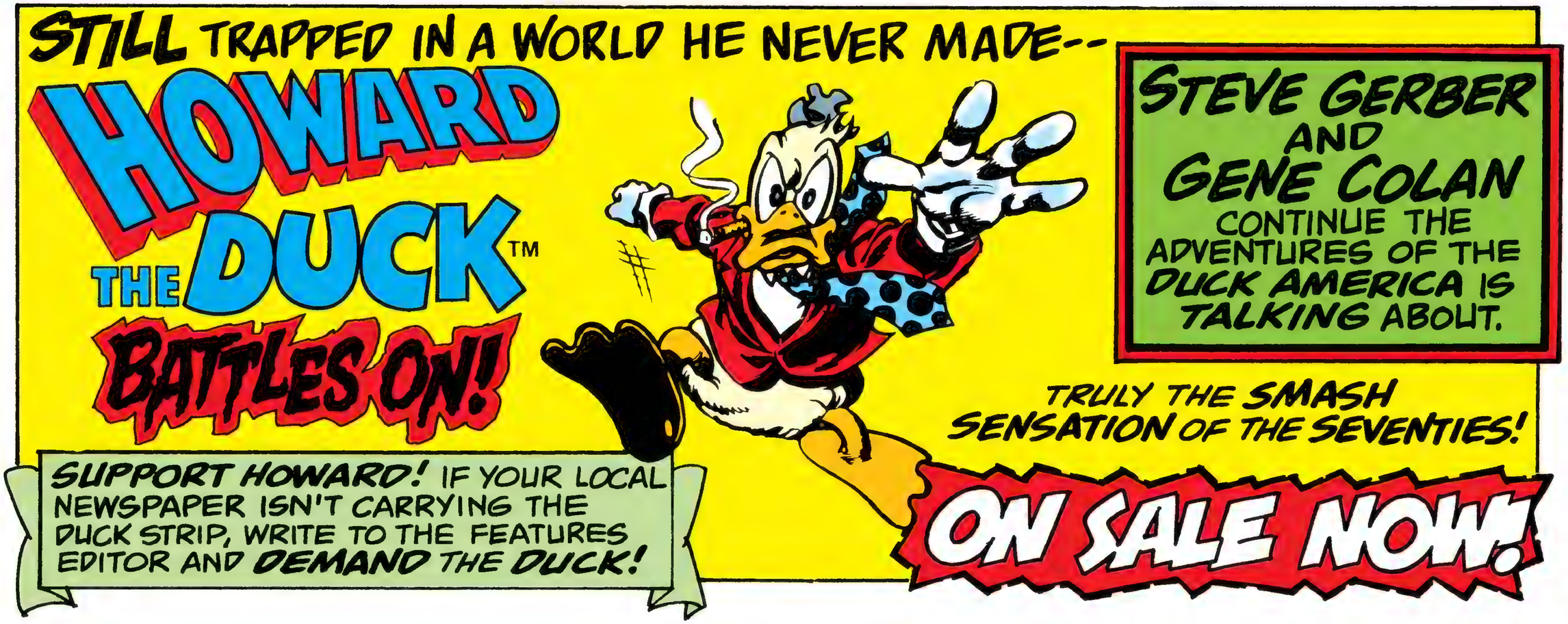
Howard the Duck house ad
featured in *Devil Dinosaur* #2 (May 1978)



Howard the Duck house ad
featured in June 1978 titles

MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU!

HOWARD THE DUCK™

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

"HOWARD IS A **CONTEMPORARY.** HE REFLECTS THE READER'S **ANGER** AND **FRUSTRATION** AND, MAYBE MOST OF ALL HIS SENSE OF **IMPOTENCE,** THE FEELING THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, THINGS'LL KEEP ON GETTING **WORSE.**"

--Stan Lee

WAAUGH!

FROM **PLAYBOY** TO THE **VILLAGE VOICE,** EVERYBODY IS TALKING ABOUT **HOWARD!** BUT **STEVE GERBER** AND **GENE COLAN** KEEP PRODUCING THIS MONTHLY DOSE OF **MADNESS,** ANYWAY!

™

AND NOW A MESSAGE FROM **BEVERLY SWITZLER...**

GET DOWN, AMERICA!

IF YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER DOESN'T FEATURE THE DAILY HOWARD COMIC STRIP, CONTACT THE PAPER'S FEATURE EDITOR ***RIGHT NOW! DEMAND*** YOUR ***DUCK!*** THANK YOU.

"PIANO"
--STEVE GERBER

PICK UP HOWARD'S LATEST ADVENTURE

ON SALE NOW!

©1978 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Howard the Duck house ad
featured in July 1978 titles

PRESENTING A CURE FOR **HIGH ANXIETY!**

HOWARD THE DUCK™

COMPARED TO HOWARD'S PROBLEMS, YOU **DON'T** HAVE ANYTHING TO **WORRY** ABOUT! --UNLESS YOU MISS THE LATEST ISSUE! OH, GOD! THAT'S UNTHINKABLE!

SCRIPTED AND EDITED BY: **STEVE GERBER** | ART BY: **GENE COLAN & KLAUS JANSON** | ENJOYED BY: **LOTS OF PEOPLE WITH GOOD TASTE!**

MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU!

NOW PLAYING AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSTAND!
CHECK YOUR NEWSPAPERS FOR THE HOWARD THE DUCK COMIC STRIP AND FURTHER NONSENSE!

©1978 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Crazy Magazine #28 (August 1977)

CRAZY INVITES YOU TO THE FIRST ANNUAL, GENUINE, DULY AUTHORIZED . . . SUPERHERO CONVENTION

Writer: Stu Schwartzberg Artist: Alan Kupperberg

BUY CRAZY

HELP! HELP!

Will you wait a minute up there? I can't come to the rescue looking like a mess!

A little lower. Ahhh, that's it! What a heckuva itch that was!

What a folly that my enchanted hammer should be used as a back-scratcher!

Okay, buddy, where's the fire?

NUTZ!

KA-TOONG! KA-TOONG!

Though I have traversed the universe countless times, the savagry of man on this planet is unparalleled anywhere! Once again I have been brutalized by one of their barbaric number!

Jeez, Mac! So I stepped on your foot! I *said* I was sorry!

Sneezing without covering up his mouth! And they call **me** a barbarian!

CAP?

If you ask me, Tree Man is going to the dogs!

WA

TH

HMPH! How cum no one says hello?

Duck named Howard bother Hulk with smelly cigar! So Hulk smash Duck!

OOPS, sorry, lady! I'm blind, y'know. Heh-heh!

BY "CONVENTIONAL" ALAN KUPPERBERG 2-77

It's an outrage! $2.50 to check my cape?

How come you got sick while we were ordering seafood!

I saw my cousin on the menu!

SPARE A FIN?

ATCHOO

That's not funny, Stretcho! Sue could get hurt that way!

I think I have a touch of heartburn!

I wouldn't be a bit surprised!

TEAR ALONG DOTTED LINE

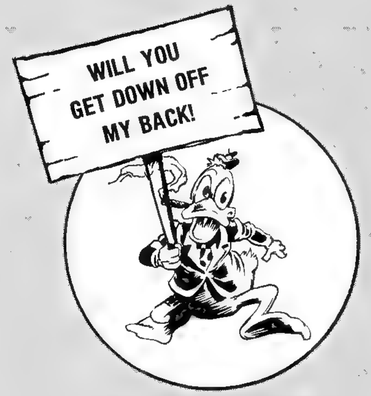
SUPER STAN

Listen, Buddy, until Marvel Comics invented one, there were no female superheroes!

So who did they invent?

Sue Storm, the Invisible Girl!

THE END



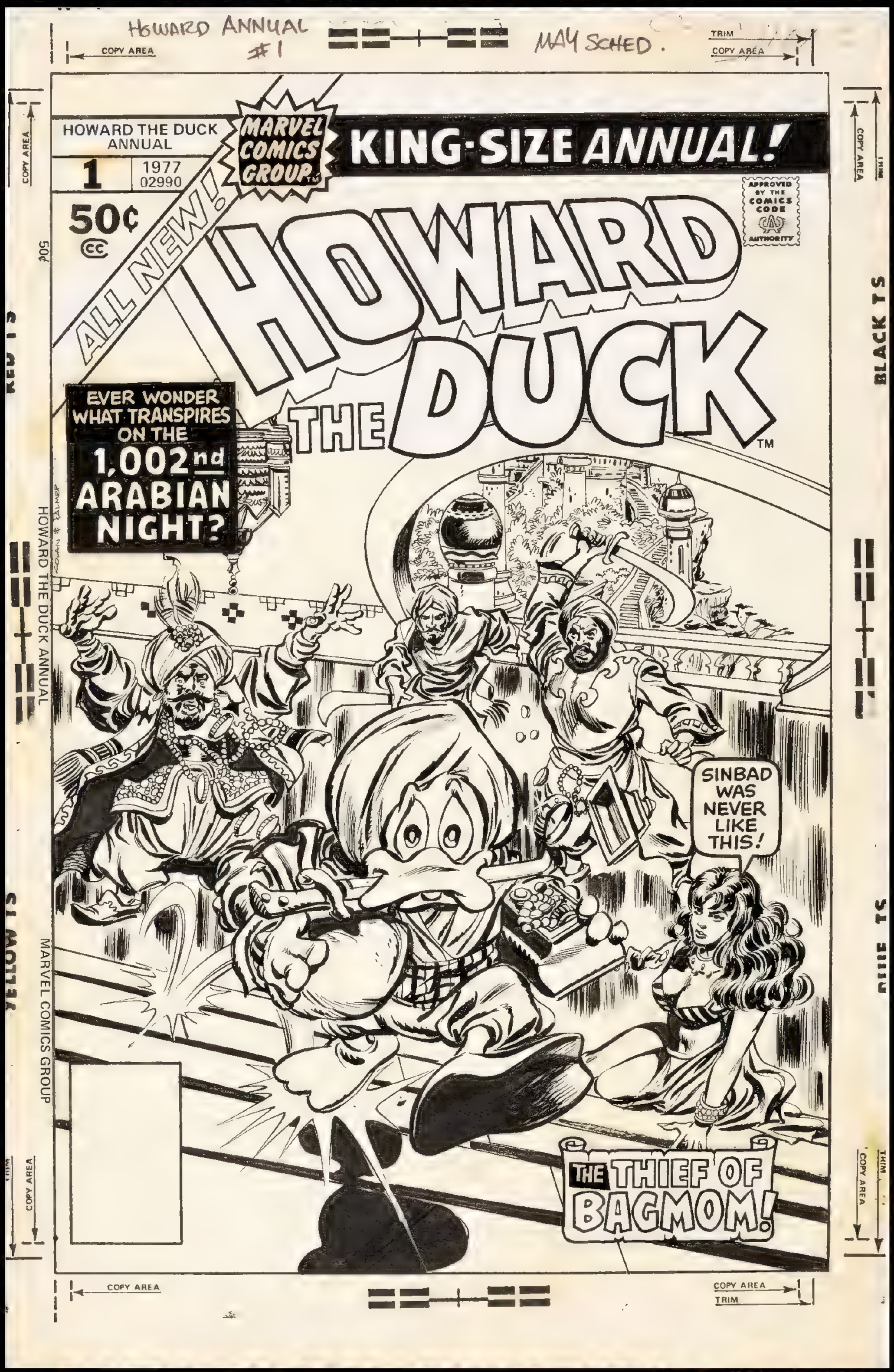
THE ONE-AND-ONLY
ORIGINAL HOWARD

Who's the biggest superhero in comic books today? None other than a waddling, boisterous, cocky, short-tailed little duck named Howard. Since he's caught on so big, we fully expect that soon we'll be seeing...

OTHER VERSIONS OF HOWARD THE DUCK

(as conceived by Jim Newsome)

Howard the Duck Annual #1 cover original art
by Gene Colan & Tom Palmer



Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

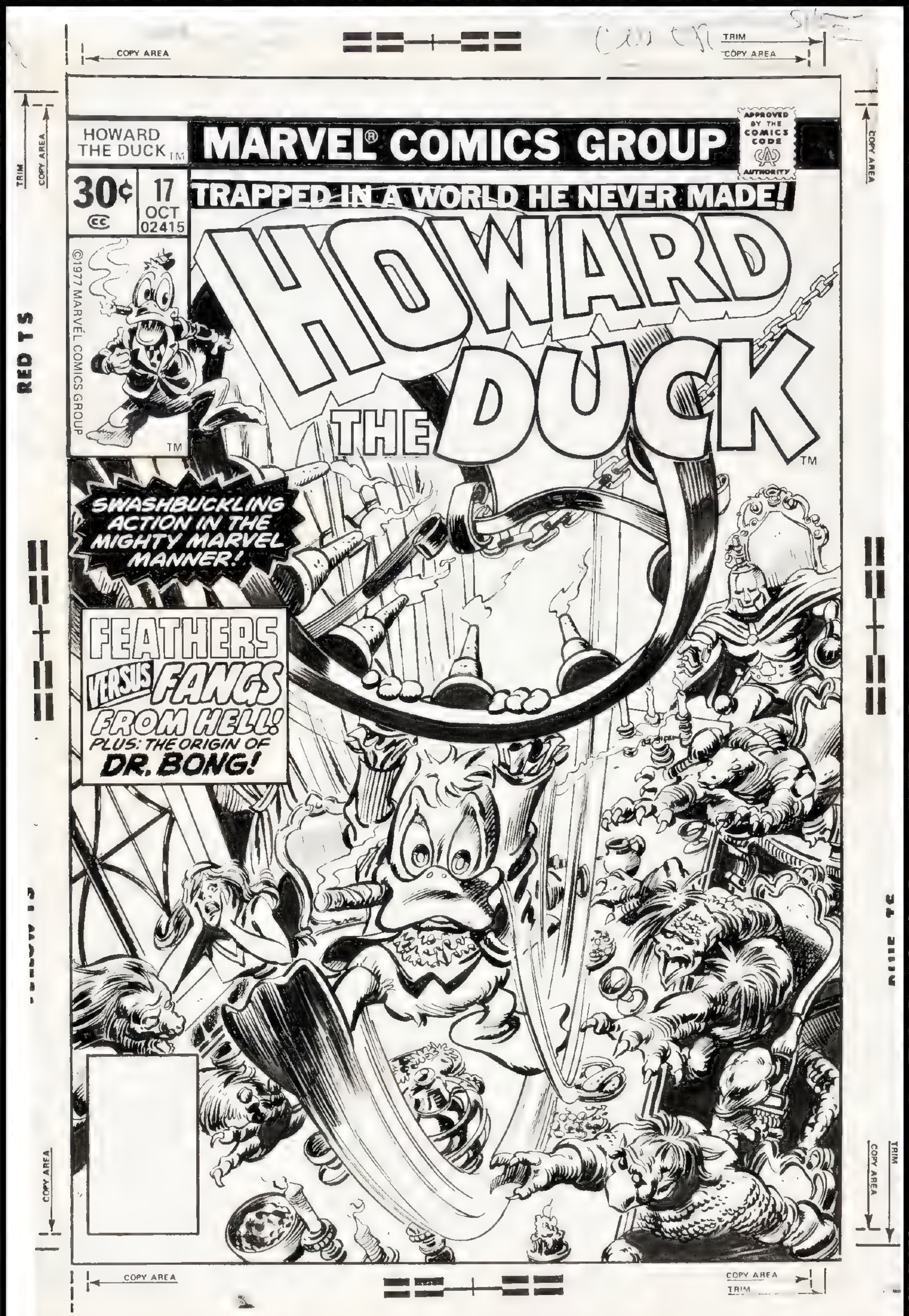
Howard the Duck Annual #1, page 2 original art
by Val Mayerik

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #16 cover pencil art
by Gene Colan

Courtesy Hake's Auctions

Howard the Duck #17 cover original art
by Gene Colan & Tom Palmer



Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #18, page 12 original art
by Gene Colan & Klaus Janson

18 22

NOW **WAITAMINIT,** SHORTY-- DON'T PREACH TA **ME!** IF I WANNA INDULGE IN A LITTLE HEALTHY DESPAIR--

MONSIEUR...AT WHOM ARE YOU **SHOUTING?**

OH, DEAR...!

PERHAPS...**MONSIEUR!** ATTENTION, S'IL VOUS PLÂIT!

REGARDEZ-- LE BEEG, FAT **STOGIE!**

WHA'--?

FIF, I THINK YA JUST RESCUED MY SANITY! **MERCI,** SWEETHEART!

BUT CAN YA DO **LIKEWISE** FOR MY **BOD?**

I BEG YOUR-- **AH!** ESCAPE, YOU MEAN! MAIS OUI!

AHEM ON ONE CONDITION: WE BLOW ZIS JOINT **TOGETHER,** EH?

*OH, HOWARD **TRIES** TO DISSUADE HER: "IT'S AN APE-EAT-APE WORLD OUT THERE, BABE. IT'S NO **PLACE** FER A SENSITIVE, INTELLIGENT **DUCK.***

*"LISTEN TA THE VOICE OF **EXPERIENCE,** KID. **THIS** IS YER WORLD! **STAY--!"***

*TO WHICH FIFI REPLIES, **"FOOEY!",** AND REMINDS HIM THAT **HE** HAS NOT BEEN TRAINED TO PILOT A **FLYING BONGER.***

22

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #19, page 12 original art
by Gene Colan & Klaus Janson

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Howard the Duck #20, page 1 original art
by Gene Colan & Klaus Janson

95

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed*. Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

STAN LEE PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

STEVE GERBER WRITER/EDITOR
GENE COLAN ARTIST
KLAUS JANSON INKER
J. COSTANZA, LETTERER
JAN COHEN, COLORIST

HERE'S LIVING PROOF THAT THE CONCEPT OF PRIVACY IS IN MORTAL DANGER:

THIS IS THE SHOWER STALL IN AMY POPE'S LOWER MANHATTAN APARTMENT.

AND THE FIEND CROUCHING BETWEEN HOWARD AND HYGIENE IS--

DR. BONG!!

SCRUBBA-DUB DEATH!

Y-YOU OUGHTTA BE ASHAMED O' YERSELF!

WH-WHY AREN'T YOU AT HOME-- WITH YER NEW BRIDE?!

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Howard the Duck #27, page 1 original art
by Gene Colan & Klaus Janson

Gene Colan best wishes

From the time of his hatching, he was...different. A potentially brilliant scholar who dreaded the structured environment of school, he educated himself in the streets, taking whatever work was available, formulating his philosophy of self from what he learned of the world about him. And then the Cosmic Axis shifted...and that world *changed.* Suddenly, he was stranded in a universe he could not fathom. Without warning, he became a strange fowl in an even stranger land.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: HOWARD THE DUCK!™

FINGERS WAG, VOICES NAG--ACCUSATIONS, REMONSTRATIONS, DENUNCIATIONS--FROM OUT OF THE **VOID!**

"HOWARD THE COWARD!" THEY CRY.

"OFF WITH HIS **HEAD!** STUFF HIM! ROAST HIM IN HIS OWN **WELT-SCHMERZ!**"

AAAH--**SHADDUP!**

BUT LIKE SOME GREEK CHORUS--OR PERHAPS A ROOMFUL OF ITALIAN **WAITERS**--THE SHOUTS GREW **LOUDER**, MORE **HOSTILE**--EACH DROWNING OUT THE OTHER IN A CACOPHONY OF UNINTELLIGIBLE **BABBLE!**

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

STEVE GERBER / WRITER / EDITOR | GENE COLAN / ARTIST | KLAUS JANSON / INKER | GASBAY / LETTERS | PHIL R. / COLORS | JIM SHOOTER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

C894

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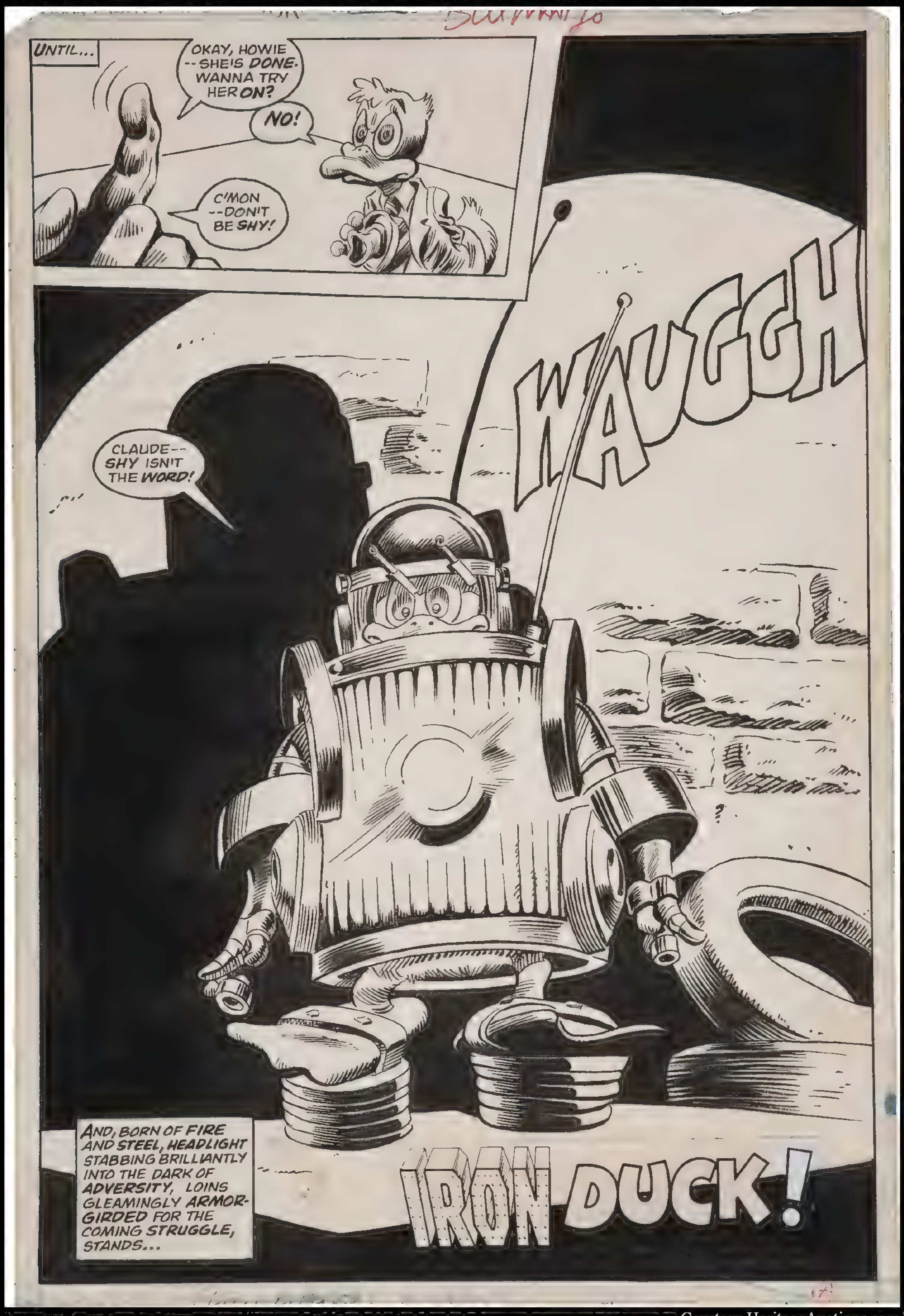
Howard the Duck #30, page 14 original art
by Gene Colan & Al Milgrom



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BIOGRAPHIES

STEVE GERBER

If he had only been known for his work on *Howard the Duck*, Steve Gerber would still have been renowned as one of comics' most iconoclastic creators. After an unrewarding start as a copy writer in his native St. Louis, Gerber reached out to a fellow comics fan from his youth, Roy Thomas, and shortly thereafter began editing and writing for Marvel. He started on titles like *Iron Man*, *Sub-Mariner* and *Daredevil*, but it was his runs on *Man-Thing*, *The Defenders*, *Omega the Unknown* and *Howard the Duck* that defined his Marvel tenure as one of creative boundary pushing.

In *The Defenders* and *Omega the Unknown*, Gerber turned standard super-heroics upside down with his irreverent and sometimes inscrutable take on the genre. He took over Man-Thing shortly after the character's premiere as part of Marvel's early-'70s wave of monster titles, turning the tales of the shambling mass into a cult classic. And it was in *Man-Thing* that Gerber debuted Howard the Duck, the semi-autobiographical waterfowl that became an industry sensation and gave the writer a platform to share his sophisticated sense of humor and satire, gently and sometimes not-so-gently skewering politics, pop culture, and especially the comics industry.

A dispute over Howard with Marvel caused him to leave the company. It didn't stop him from returning to the character later in his career, but from the '80s on, his writing was mostly in animation and television, where he created *Thundarr the Barbarian* and won a Daytime Emmy as part of the team behind *The Batman/Superman Movie: World's Finest*. He also scripted *G.I. Joe*, *Transformers* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, as well as the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode "Contagion." Gerber passed away in 2008 after a battle with pulmonary fibrosis. His career accomplishments won him posthumous induction into the 2010 class of the Eisner Hall of Fame and the 2013 Bill Finger Award for Excellence in Comic Book Writing.

GENE COLAN

Gene "The Dean" Colan spent his life as a comics artist perfecting a unique style that relied on realistic figure drawing and moody shadows. At a time when the norm lent itself to more abstract cartooning, Colan helped broaden the aesthetic range of what comics could look like.

Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Colan always had an interest in drawing, and he took up studies at the Art Students League of New York. Colan served his country during World War II in the Philippines, and though this delayed his art career, it eventually paid off with a solid acumen at drawing realistic scenes of warfare for DC Comics (*Our Army at War*, *All-American Men at War*) and the Atlas/Marvel titles (*Battle*, *Marines in Battle*, *Navy Combat*). Over the next 15 years, Colan would continue to work on war, romance, horror and sci-fi comics, as well as licensed titles like *Hopalong Cassidy*.

But when the super-hero genre broke wide open again in the '60s, Colan was ready to take it on with gusto. Under the pseudonym Adam Austin, he first drew Marvel Comics super heroes, including Namor, the Sub-Mariner in *Tales to Astonish* and Iron Man in *Tales of Suspense*. Colan then moved on to a celebrated run on *Doctor Strange* with Roy Thomas, and a stint on *Captain America*, but the Marvel character he is most often associated with is Daredevil. Colan's *Daredevil* pages were steeped in fluid, athletic grace for nearly every issue across an 80-issue run leading to #100. He also drew a handful of issues right before Frank Miller would come on board, Miller's *Daredevil* naturally owing a great debt to the already established visual precepts of the Colan era.

During the rest of the '70s, Colan displayed the diversity of his talents drawing the satirical *Howard the Duck* and the horror series *Tomb of Dracula*. The latter was drenched in the mysterious and shadowy style that Colan had evolved over the years, which reached its zenith in the service of Marvel's version of Count Dracula. He drew the entire 70-issue run.

Colan worked steadily into the '80s, once again drawing *Doctor Strange* for Marvel and also doing work for DC, including *Night Force*, *Silver Blade* and an extended run drawing Batman. In 2005, Colan was ushered into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame, earning well-deserved acclaim for his life's work. In 2009, Colan returned to the pages of *Captain America* to draw a World War II-based epic that would win the 2010 Eisner Award for Best Single Issue. It would prove to be his last major work in comics, as he passed away in 2011 at the age of 84.

VAL MAYERIK

Val Mayerik was born in the steel town of Youngstown, Ohio, and worked in the mills to earn money for college. His artist friend and mentor Dan Adkins opened the door for him at Marvel, where he quickly found work drawing Thongor the Barbarian in *Creatures on the Loose*, as well as adaptations of John Jakes' Brak the Barbarian in *Chamber of Chills* and H.G. Wells' Invisible Man in *Supernatural Thrillers*. In addition to his regular work on Thongor, Mayerik illustrated the macabre Man-Thing in *Fear*, and would carry on drawing into the character's self-titled series in 1974. Mayerik quickly became a key contributor to Marvel's early '70s horror revival, augmenting his Man-Thing work with *Frankenstein* and the Living Mummy in *Supernatural Thrillers*. It was in the 19th issue of *Fear* that Mayerik would co-create one of comics' most unusual and memorable characters, Howard the Duck. In 1976, Mayerik began a six-issue stint drawing *Ka-Zar*, a title he would return to in 1982 for the "Tales of Zabu" backup. In between penciling assignments, Mayerik inked a host of comics as well. Mayerik also had an interest in acting, starring in the low-budget horror film *The Demon Lover* in 1977 and acting off-Broadway. By the early '90s, Mayerik was drawing various Punisher series and *Bruce Lee*, a six-issue 1994 series from Malibu, but he had begun to transition to work in advertising. He returned to comics

in 2015 after successfully funding a Kickstarter initiative to draw *Of Dust and Blood*, an original graphic novel about Little Big Horn.

MARK EVANIER

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Mark Evanier knew from a very early age that there was one thing and one thing only he was born to do: write. Encouraged by his parents and steeped in the television, movies and comic books of the 1950s and '60s, he graduated from high school and went straight into a career in writing. Not long after selling his first articles to local magazines, he met Jack Kirby, who had recently moved to Southern California. That meeting led to an assistantship with the legendary artist. While working with Steve Sherman as Kirby's right-hand man, Evanier began writing for Gold Key's stable of Disney and Warner Brothers comic books. Further comics work in the '70s included scripting *Tarzan* and *Korak*, writing Hanna-Barbera comic adaptations, and a Falcon story in *Marvel Premiere*. Meanwhile, Evanier branched out into television writing.

By 1974, he had teamed with screenwriter Dennis Palumbo in a writing partnership, with their biggest success being a lengthy run as story editors on *Welcome Back, Kotter*. Evanier split amicably from Palumbo and scripted variety shows, including the cult hit *Pink Lady and Jeff*, and animated shows, including *Scooby-Doo*, *Thundarr the Barbarian* and *Superman: The Animated Series*. In 1982, Evanier collaborated with cartoonist and *MAD Magazine* alumnus Sergio Aragones on his most enduring achievement in comics, *Groo the Wanderer*, a satire on Conan the Barbarian nearing its 200th issue. He also wrote multiple titles for DC, including a run on *Blackhawk*. At Eclipse Comics, he created and wrote the long-running *DNAgents* and its spinoff *Crossfire*. Evanier produced and wrote *Garfield and Friends*, a top-rated Saturday morning cartoon on CBS, from 1988-94; his relationship with the cartoon cat continued in 2009 with *The Garfield Show*. Other animated shows under his belt include *Mother Goose and Grimm*, *Wuzzles*, and *Dungeons & Dragons*. In addition to his writing credits for comics and television, Evanier is also the foremost biographer of his mentor, Jack Kirby, with the 2008 monograph *Kirby: King of Comics* and a yet-to-be-released in-depth biography.

CARMINE INFANTINO

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Carmine Infantino attended the School of Industrial Art in Manhattan, though his best art education would come the summer of his freshman year in what amounted to a paid internship in Harry Chesler's studio. The teenager absorbed the work of the artists around him there. Infantino's first published work in comics was a Stan Lee-written Jack Frost story in *U.S.A. Comics* #1. Emboldened by the thrill of being published, the teenager wanted to quit school and take up art full-time. This idea was quickly put down by his father, but upon his graduation Infantino took up the career that he had been waiting for. He freelanced, drawing for Timely, Fawcett, Hillman and DC. At the latter company, he drew the first Black Canary appearance in *Flash Comics* #86 and became regular artist for *Green Lantern Comics* and *Justice Society of America*. In 1956, Infantino was assigned to give the Flash a makeover in a revival of the Golden Age hero. The new Flash, Barry Allen, came with a new costume to highlight his speedy super-powers and heralded the beginning of the Silver Age of super heroes. Infantino also drew the outer space adventures of Adam Strange in *Mystery In Space*, the macabre super-heroics of Deadman in *Strange Adventures* and designed the "New Look" Batman. By the late '60s, his graphic design sense and art skills emboldened DC to elevate him to editorial director—and ultimately publisher—where he set up the editorial regime that would define DC for the next decade. He also recruited Jack Kirby to DC in a bold move against competitor Marvel. Overall, his executive moves provided mixed returns, and he was fired in 1976. A freelancer once more, Infantino drew *Nova*, *Avengers*, *Iron Man* and a long run of *Star Wars* for Marvel. By 1981, he was back drawing at DC, including a long run on *Flash*. Infantino retired from regular work in the early '90s and was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 2000. He passed away in 2013.

BILL MANTLO

From the mid-'70s through the late-'80s, Bill Mantlo established himself as one of the most dedicated writers in the comics industry, writing hundreds of stories across dozens of titles, primarily for Marvel Comics.

Mantlo broke into comics as a colorist, but it wasn't long before he was given a crack at writing a fill-in story, a "Sons of the Tiger" story in the black-and-white *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* magazine, and his true comics talent began to emerge. The quality of his work led to his installation as that book's regular writer, a tenure that included the notable achievement of introducing comics' first Puerto Rican hero, the White Tiger.

After achieving notoriety within the Marvel offices as a guy who could knock out credible fill-in scripts at a moment's notice, Mantlo was given more regular work. One early highlight was his 20-issue tenure on *Iron Man* that began the Golden Avenger's return to prominence. As one might expect from someone with such a volume of work, Mantlo was game to take on projects others dismissed, and he did it with an unfeigned aplomb that elevated the work.

It was on two licensed titles that Mantlo built his legacy. Inspired by a toy given to his son at Christmas, Mantlo lobbied Marvel to adapt Micronauts into an ongoing series. The award-winning epic he spun with artistic luminaries like Michael Golden and Pat Broderick is still highly revered by comics fandom as is his even longer run on *Rom*, wherein he developed a universe filled with Spaceknights, Dire Wraith monsters and outer space intrigue. Other notable credits in Mantlo's career include *Incredible Hulk*, *Alpha Flight* and *Spectacular Spider-Man*.

Just as Mantlo had begun a new career as a public defender with the New York City Legal Aid Society, he was struck by a hit-and-run driver and went into a weeks-long coma from severe head trauma. He has since been under constant medical care. The comics community has led multiple fundraisers to aid in the continuing care of a talented writer who is missed by his many fans.

WILL MEUGNIOT

Artist Will Meugniot co-created *DNAgents,* a mid-'80s indie hit, with writer Mark Evanier at Eclipse Comics. At Marvel, Meugniot's credits include issues of *Howard the Duck* and *Marvel Team-Up*, a pair of Tigra stories in *Marvel Chillers* and a Solomon Kane tale in *Marvel Preview*. Meugniot also plied his talents in the animation business, where he received acclaim working as a storyboard artist, producer and director on dozens of shows including *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*, *G.I. Joe*, *Batman: The Animated Series*, *X-Men: The Animated Series*, *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* and *The Real Ghostbusters*, the latter two series netting him Emmy nominations.

MARV WOLFMAN

Marv Wolfman's stints writing for movies, television, animation and novels mark him as a varied and highly regarded talent, but it is his comic book writing where he first gained prestige as one of the industry's most acclaimed talents.

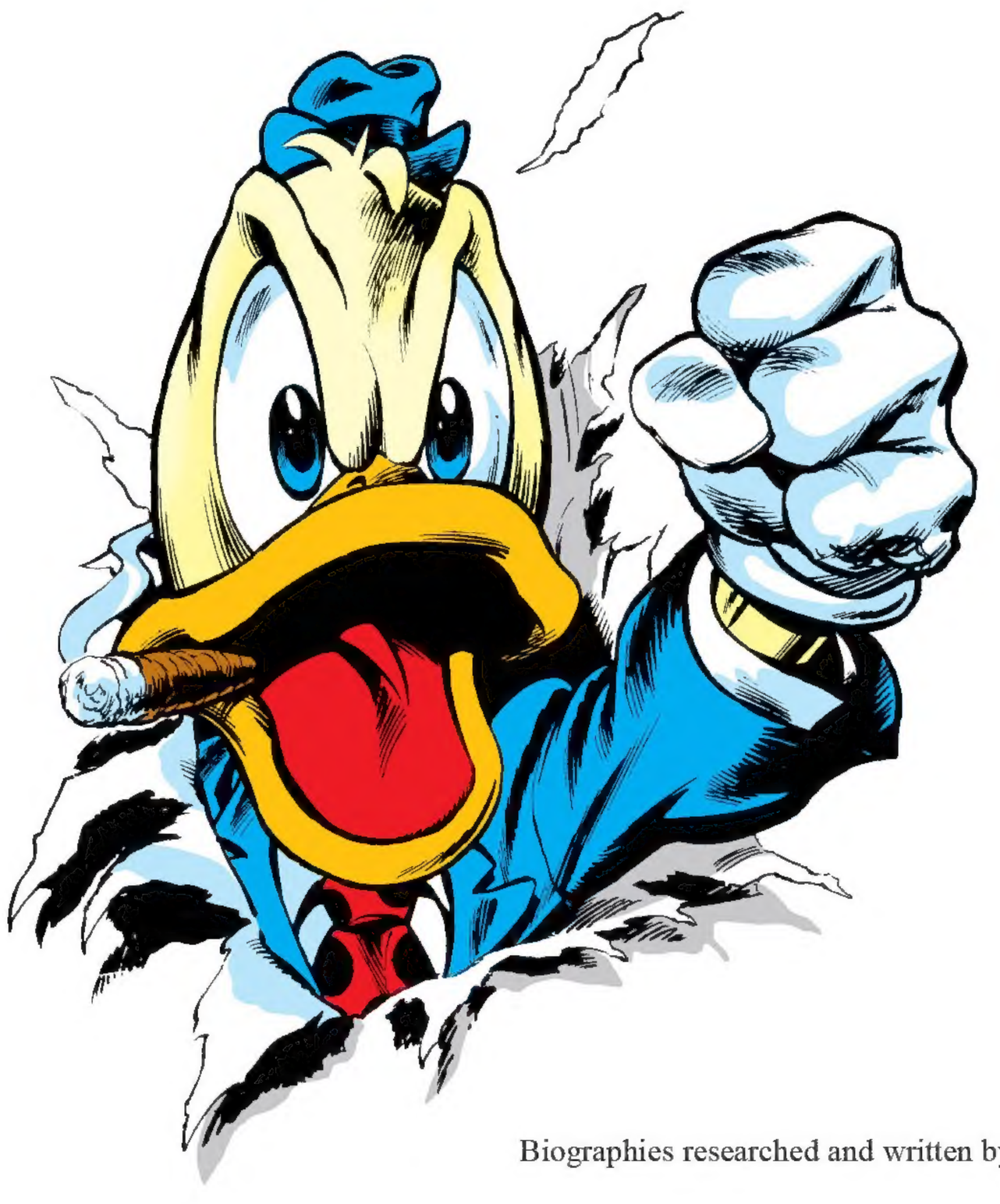
His first forays into the comic industry were short tenures as editor and writer for both Warren Publishing and DC Comics, but it was after a move to Marvel in 1972 that his career began to blossom. One of his earliest hits was *Tomb of Dracula*, Marvel's adaptation of the classic Bram Stoker vampire. It was in the pages of *Tomb of Dracula* that Wolfman and Gene Colan unveiled the character Blade, the vampire hunter. This earthly hero was one of the earliest black heroes in comics and was introduced to further affirm the realism he sought to inject into the Dracula comic.

After editing Marvel's black-and-white magazines, he quickly stepped up the ladder to follow Len Wein as editor-in-chief. Wolfman had noted that the readership, who like himself had become loyal fans in their adolescence, felt it was important to have the stories Marvel produced "grow up" along with them. His editorial duties, however, stole time from his writing, so in 1976 he stepped down and took on writing full-time.

As writer of *Daredevil*, his two-year run preceded the Frank Miller era and included the introduction of Bullseye, now the most innovative and fearsome of Daredevil's rogues' gallery. Other work from his prolific Marvel tenure in the late '70s included lengthy runs on Marvel's two flagship titles: *The Amazing Spider-Man* (including the debut of the Black Cat) and *Fantastic Four* as well runs on *Nova*, *Doctor Strange* and *Thor*.

Moving to DC, he teamed with artist George Pérez and ushered in *New Teen Titans*. Most of the Titans came to life under his auspices, including Cyborg, Nightwing, Starfire, and Raven, as well as their nemesis Deathstroke. Next, Wolfman and Pérez delivered the epochal *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, condensing DC's complex 50 year history into a single, shared universe.

Taking a lengthy sabbatical from writing comics, Wolfman moved to writing for animation shows including *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers*, later becoming comics editor for *Disney Adventures Magazine*. He continues to write for DC Comics and more recently, has penned the nonfiction *Homeland, the Illustrated History of the State of Israel*. In 2011 Marv was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.



Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee.

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-24
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-3
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-23
THE BLACK PANTHER VOLS. 1-3
BROTHER VOODOO VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-14
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-6
THE CHAMPIONS VOL. 1
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-17
DAZZLER VOLS. 1-4
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
THE DEFENDERS VOLS. 1-8
DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-10
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-24
GHOST RIDER VOLS. 1-4
HOWARD THE DUCK VOLS. 1-2
THE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-2
THE INCREDIBLE HULK VOLS. 1-16
THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-16
IRON FIST VOLS. 1-2
KA-ZAR VOLS. 1-3
KILLRAVEN VOL. 1
LUKE CAGE VOLS. 1-3
MARVEL RARITIES VOL. 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-6
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE VOLS. 1-6
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-21
MS. MARVEL VOLS. 1-2
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
NOT BRAND ECHH VOL. 1
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-5
SPIDER-WOMAN VOLS. 1-3
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-8
THE TOMB OF DRACULA VOLS. 1-2
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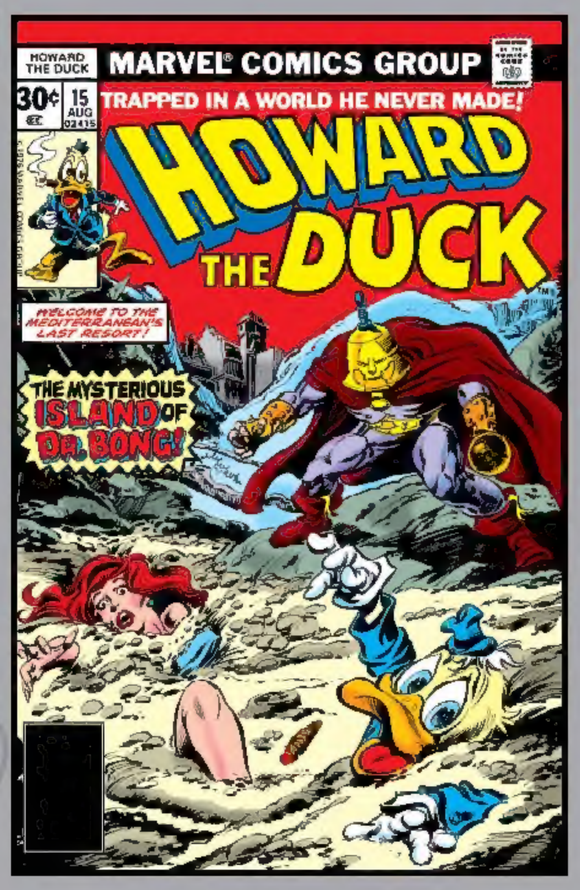
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-15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THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF DR. BONG!

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HOWARD THE HUMAN
"A FOWL NO MORE!"

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HOWARD THE DUCK
CLEANSE!
PURIFY!
DISINFECT!
DEODORIZE!
MY BLEACH, BORAX, AND HEAVY-DUTY ENZYMES WILL SCOUR YOU FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, DUCK!
THE WONDROUS WATERFOWL FACES THE FOAMING ACTION OF SUDD, THE SCRUBBING BUBBLE THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN!

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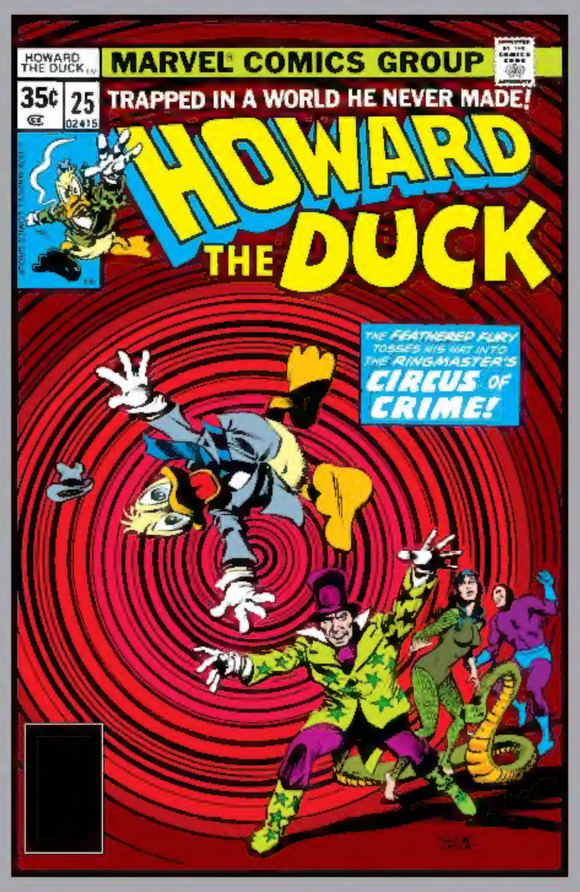
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
BANG
RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE IN A GALAXY TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT...
STAR WAAUGH!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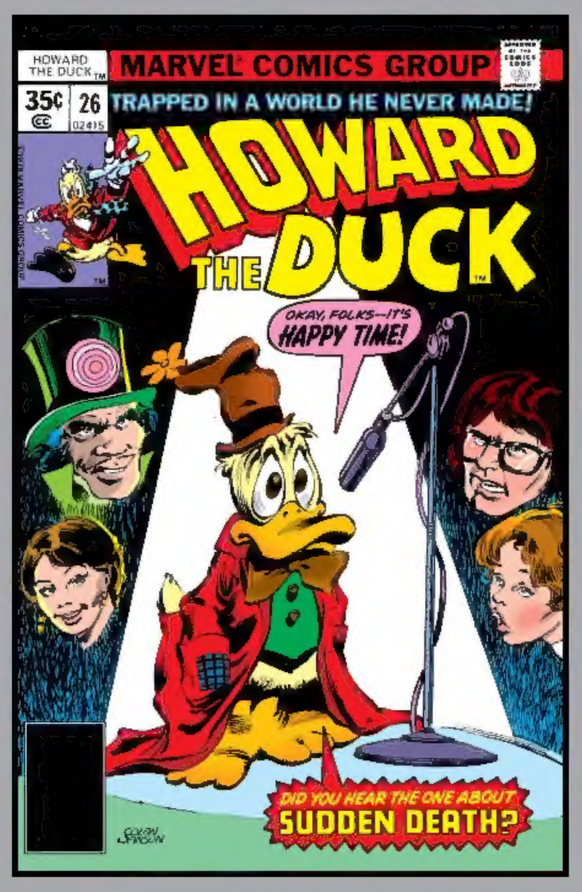
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
THE FEATHERED FURY TOSSES HIS HAT INTO THE RINGMASTER'S CIRCUS OF CRIME!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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
OKAY, FOLKS—IT'S HAPPY TIME!
DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT SUDDEN DEATH?

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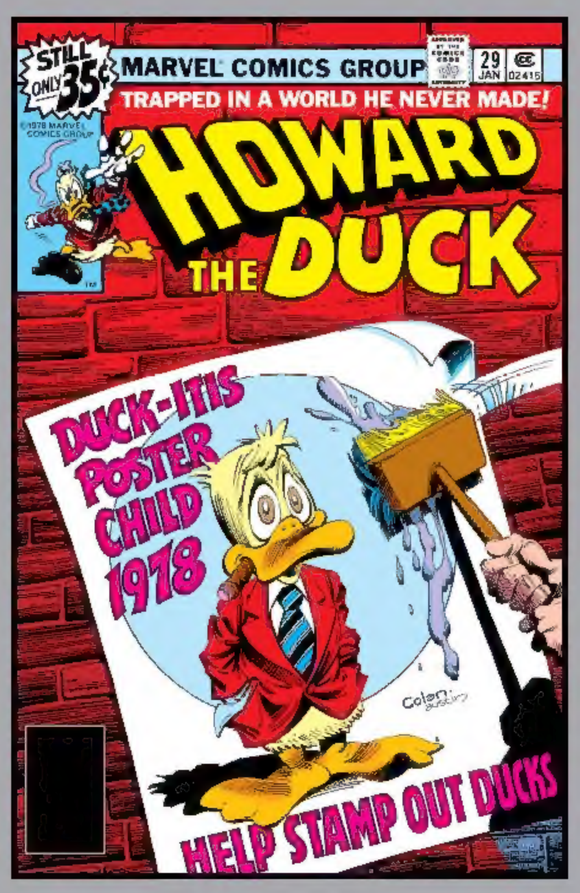
TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
AN OFFBEAT MASTERPIECE THAT WE CAN ONLY CALL—
COOKING WITH GAS!
NEW HEIGHTS OF INSANITY! NEW DEPTHS OF INSIGHT! FROM SAME OL' MARVEL!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HOWARD THE DUCK
DUCK-ITIS POSTER CHILD 1978
HELP STAMP OUT DUCKS

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TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!
HOWARD THE DUCK
FORGED IN THE FLAMES OF FRENZY— THE MOST UNWILLING WARRIOR OF ALL:
IRON DUCK
WAUGH!
TO BATTLE DOCTOR BONG